

PLANNING STATEMENT

On behalf of Rochdale Development Agency

In support of its proposed development of the “Corner Plot” for

Demolition of 33-41 Maclure Road and partial demolition at rear of 29-31 Maclure Road and Conversion of 29-31 Maclure Road and Erection of a 6-storey building to provide 38 apartments (Use Class C3) across combined upper floors with ground floor commercial use (Use Classes E(a), E(b), E(c) and E(e)), associated infrastructure and ancillary works

DECEMBER 2023

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CONTENTS

1 Summary Statement	3
2 Introduction	8
3 Site Context.....	11
4 Proposed Development	16
5 Relevant Planning Policy & Guidance.....	18
6 Analysis.....	28
7 Planning Balance	53

STATEMENTS EMBODIED IN REPORT

Summary Statement	3
Affordable Housing Statement	33
Open Space Assessment	49
Retail Assessment	51
(Town Centre Uses Sequential Site Assessment)	

1 SUMMARY STATEMENT

1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of Rochdale Development Agency (RDA) in support of its regeneration proposal for the 'Corner Plot' site located at the Rochdale Station Gateway.

1.2 The proposed development has been developed in line with a brief to:

“To deliver a proposal for high quality new residential homes in the form of carbon net zero apartments, enveloped in a bold and contextual design, on a key focal site opposite the train station in Rochdale.”

1.3 The proposal will deliver 38 new apartments with commercial space at ground floor within the retained and converted 29-31 Maclure Road and a new 6-storey building at 33-41 Maclure Road.

1.4 No.29-31 Maclure Road will be retained with internal alterations at each floor to accommodate the proposed commercial (ground) and residential (1st and 2nd) uses. To rear existing outriggers will be demolished and replaced by single-storey extension to provide service / support accommodation for the development. Existing shopfront, windows and other details will be replaced or renovated.

1.5 No.33-41 Maclure Road, an existing single-storey commercial building divided into retail units, will be demolished. Originally built during the 1950s as car showroom the building detracts from the streetscene and sense of arrival at Rochdale Station.

1.6 The new 6-storey building will trace a curved façade to the road which is planned for extensive pedestrianisation as the new Station Square by the Council in 2024. The ground floor will provide commercial floorspace, linked internally to refurbished nos.29-31, and separate residential entrance and ancillary facilities (includes cycle parking and bin store with separate street entrances). Upper floors will be in residential apartment use, linked on first and second floors to nos.29-31, to operate as a single entity.

1.7 Externally the new building will be predominantly in a red facing brick with detailing to ground floor and in banding and other details in a sandstone colour / finish to echo the character and materiality of nos.29-31. The 5th floor roof level of the new building will be set back and a metallic or anodised panel finish. Other detailing includes chamfered returns on the new build, banding, headers and cills.

- 1.8 Building design incorporates attainment of LETI Net Zero Carbon in Operation and SAP10 Net Zero Carbon in Design (NZCiD) through implementation of high-performance building materials, low air permeability, and a number of energy-efficient and renewable technologies
- 1.9 As a highly sustainable location adjacent to train, tram and bus services and within walking and cycling distance of the town centre and its shops, services and facilities, no car parking will be provided; only cycle parking. This approach reflects the objectives of the Council through its Core Strategy, Rochdale Station Area SPD (2021) and Rail Corridor strategy (2020).
- 1.10 The scheme has not been developed in isolation. It is part of a wider regeneration strategy focus on the station, including the reimaging and pedestrianisation of the station square recently approved and to implemented in 2024. This is part of the wider Rochdale Station Area SPD and its Vision to deliver *inter alia* 1,500 new homes around Rochdale station to house 3,500 people; a new public square at the station; and promotion of living and working adjacent to stations to reduce carbon emissions through greater use of public transport, cycling and walking. The SPD sets out that;

“Any improvements that enhance the image, visual appearance and safety of the area will be encouraged. All new developments will be expected to create a strong visual frontage to the Square. Any new development should be well designed and be sensitive to the characteristics of the conservation area. Each development should help to contribute to a higher quality aspirational streetscape to further enrich active frontage on Station Road.”
- 1.11 Corner Plot is an important first step in formation of a new built environment around the Station Square. Setting the standard and tone for high-quality design, use of materials and finishes. It also marks introduction of modern, sustainable apartments targeted at a younger, professional private rental market to achieve a change in perception of the area and develop a housing market that best takes advantage of the commuting connections to Manchester, whilst allowing people to live more affordably than in the city.
- 1.12 The development therefore performs an important social, economic and environmental role in delivering sustainable development.
- 1.13 Evidence on a range of technical matters of transport, access, drainage, flood risk, archaeology, ground conditions, bats, air quality, noise and vibration all demonstrate a policy compliant proposal.

- 1.14 Assessment of heritage impact on the Maclure Road Conservation Area, the Grade II* Listed St Johns RC Church and non-designated assets including the Fire Station, reveal limited impact. A very slight impact on the landmark qualities of the Grade II* listed RC Church (and associative impacts on the conservation area) in the meaning of Framework paragraph 202 is identified. And in connection with the non-designated Fire Station there is potential for a slight/minor negative impact on in relation to its landmark qualities, particularly its tower in the meaning of Framework 203. Neither impact is significant and at the lowest end of the scale of impact at very slight or slight.
- 1.15 Residential amenity has been carefully considered and it has been demonstrated that there a degree of harm arises to Nos.9 & 10 Fire Station Yard at the rear of the site. However, that harm is limited and very specific to those two properties, relating to reduced daylight received to some, but not all windows, and overshadowing of the garden of No.10. No harm to overlooking or loss of privacy has been identified taking into account this is an inner urban location and the specific arrangement of the new building to avoid direct views between homes.
- 1.16 The harm identified to heritage and amenity is limited in each case and therefore does not attract significant weight in the planning balance. Such weight is clearly and demonstrably outweighed by the wider benefits accruing from a range of matters of planning importance, to which substantial weight must be given in the public interest which covers matters of:
- Directing development for new housing into existing urban areas, directing the right housing in the right place to meet needs;
 - Make effective and efficient reuse of brownfield land – a matter to which the Framework directs substantial weight is given in its own right;
 - Delivering development that is carbon net zero that will help address carbon emissions in a declared climate emergency by the authority;
 - Delivering on the regeneration objectives of the Core Strategy and adopted Rochdale Station Area SPD (2021), and related Growth Strategy and Rail Corridor Strategies, directing new, high density housing to station catchments; Rochdale Station the most important in scale of opportunity;
 - Delivering a bespoke, high-quality architectural design that will set a benchmark for improvements in the longer-term regeneration of the area and community;

- Promoting a car-free residential scheme to take best advantage of the sustainable transport choices available and its location
- 1.17 All told the development proposals accord with the relevant strategic objectives and policies of the Rochdale Core Strategy and associated SPD, including the Rochdale Station Area SPD 2021 which is of greatest relevance. The proposals shall:
- Support the Strategic Objectives to support a prosperous economy (SO1) through the investment into the strategic gateway site and location; promoting a successful, healthy community (SO2); improve the design quality and sense of space (SO3); and promote accessible development and sustainable transport objections (SO5)
 - Deliver on the Borough's role, strategy for growth and regeneration objectives set out through Policies SP1, SP2, SP3/R and specifically the Rochdale Station Area SPD (2021) objectives for the Station Gateway and site located within Milkstone, Deeplish & Newbold under Policy C2
 - Deliver the right type of housing in the right place in support of policies C1 and C3. Lack of affordable housing provision is permitted exception when delivering other, higher planning priorities under Policy C4, which apply here with the regeneration objectives
 - Promote the image of the area, enhance its character and improve design quality as sought under Policies P1, P2 and P3. Such limited harm as identified to heritage interest does not diminish from the broader design qualities of the proposal
 - Promote action against climate change in an acknowledged climate emergency declared by the authority, and support Policies G1 and G2 through embedded energy efficiency and use of renewable energy to lead to a carbon net zero development
 - Create a quality living environment for new residents and only very limited harm identified to amenity on impact to daylight and overshadowing of the closest garden, meaning that the proposal is in broad conformity with Policy DM1 which also covers technical considerations of air quality, noise, ground conditions, etc. to which no harm is identified
- 1.18 The proposal also supports key national planning policy objectives toward reuse of brownfield sites, efficient and effective use of land, provision of housing, supporting carbon net neutral and directing higher density development to the most sustainable



locations. All such matters are of significant importance and should be given substantial weight in the planning balance.

- 1.19 We conclude that the development is in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan and that the presumption of in favour or sustainable development under Framework paragraph 11 should apply, and planning permission should be granted without delay.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of Rochdale Development Agency in support of its planning application for a residential-led redevelopment of the site known as “Corner Plot” located on Maclure Road at the gateway to Rochdale from its railway station.
- 2.2 The Station Gateway area is by definition a transitional space allowing movement and interchange between rail, tram and bus at a key entrance, and point of departure, to the town. Within the context of the Rochdale Station Area SPD (2021) and wider Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy (2020) delivery of “Corner Plot” is an important development in its own right and statement of intent on the regeneration proposals being led by the Rochdale Development Agency that will lead to transformation of the wider neighbourhood.
- 2.3 The development proposal as submitted is for:
- “Demolition of 33-41 Maclure Road and partial demolition at rear of 29-31 Maclure Road and Conversion of 29-31 Maclure Road and Erection of a 6-storey building to provide 38 apartments (Use Class C3) across combined upper floors with ground floor commercial use (Use Classes E(a), E(b), E(c) and E(e)), associated infrastructure and ancillary works.”*
- 2.4 In more detail the proposed development will form up to 4 commercial units are ground floor fronting the corner of Maclure Road / Station Road, with entrance to the upper floor apartments off the Station Road frontage with separate access for cycle and bin stores. Upper storeys will be residential use, 5 floors in the new curved building to command the street corner and conversion of the upper two floors of retained Nos.29-31. Rear elevation of these two existing buildings will see partial demolition of later additions and alterations at ground level to provide utility services.
- 2.5 Tracing the curved road alignment the new building rises up to 6-floors with the roof level recessed and distinguished through contrast material. The resulting building will be of significantly greater stature, prominence and aid legibility of the public realm and sense of arrival into the town from the station. Its proposed scale and mass will complement wider Station Gateway improvements in the public realm approved in 2023 and the scale and mass of further development of the Haiji Cash & Carry site, opposite to the west.

- 2.6 The principle of demolition and redevelopment of the site has been accepted and promoted in the Rochdale Station Area SPD (2021) and wider Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy (2020) and masterplanning work undertaken by Broadway Malyan for the Council. Replacing the existing single-storey building with a more suitable and contextual form of development provides an opportunity to enhance the street scape and the adjacent Maclure Road Conservation Area, including the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.7 This Statement has been prepared drawing on the collective evidence and technical advice contained within the application submission from the development team comprising:
- Rochdale Development Agency – client
 - City Heart – development manager
 - Leach Rhodes Walker (LRW) – architect
 - Booth King – civil & structural engineering
 - GMEU – ecology
 - GMP – crime impact
 - OFR – fire engineer
 - Proximity – daylight analysis
 - Safer Sphere – principal designer
 - Salford University - archaeology
 - SRL – acoustic and air quality
 - TACE – mechanical & electrical design
 - Turley – heritage advisor
 - Walker Sime – quantity surveyors

2.8 The planning application submission comprises:

- Drawing pack, prepared by LRW
- Design & Access Statement
- Planning Statement, including Summary Statement (Section 1), Affordable Housing Statement, Open Space Assessment and Retail Assessment (Section 6)
- **Air Quality Assessment**
- Archaeological Assessment
- Bat Survey and Ecological Statement
- Phase 1 Site Investigation, including Coal Mining Risk Assessment
- **Crime Impact Assessment**
- Daylight / Sunlight Assessment
- Energy and Climate Change Adaption Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Structural Survey nos. 29 & 31 Maclure Road
- Sustainable Drainage Statement & SUDs pro-forma
- Transport Statement
- Travel Plan
- **Viability Appraisal**

2.9 No Heads of Terms is submitted as at this stage it is considered no developer contributions shall be required in support of the development proposals. This is covered in Section 6 of this Statement.

3 SITE CONTEXT

- 3.1 This section sets out a description of the site, location and relevant planning history.

Site

- 3.2 The site extends to approximately 780 sqm as illustrated in the Location Plan extract. The site is largely built upon to its full extent with only a small yard to rear that opens into a private, gated access that leads between Fire Station Yard to the north around the bend behind the site and east to Station Road behind Deen House.

Nos.33-41 Maclure Road

- 3.3 Nos.33-41 Maclure Road is a single-storey building in existing commercial use that traces the corner of into Station Road to the east. The building dates from post-war originally built for a small car showroom it has been variously subdivided and used for commercial uses to present day with periods of vacancy.
- 3.4 The building is of no architectural merit and is considered to actively harm the street scene at this gateway location opposite the arrival point at Rochdale railway station.

Nos.29-31 Maclure Road

- 3.5 Nos.29-31 Maclure Road is a pair of original dwelling houses built in the Edwardian period that has been since converted into commercial use, most recently at a fast-food takeaway trading as “Chicken Shaq.” The buildings are located within the designated Maclure Road Conservation Area, designated in 2006, that bisects the application site along the shared boundary of Nos.31 and 33. The residual area of the site is part of the setting of the designated area.

Location

- 3.6 From the north the site is bounded by the former fire station, “Fireground”, that contains a museum and coffee shop at ground level and co-working space at first floor. There is a car park to the rear (northeast of site) leading to homes beyond, most associated with the fire station which was constructed in the 1930s. The rear of the building also contains the former hose tower in a campanile design which was reportedly designed to complement the RC church opposite on Maclure Road.

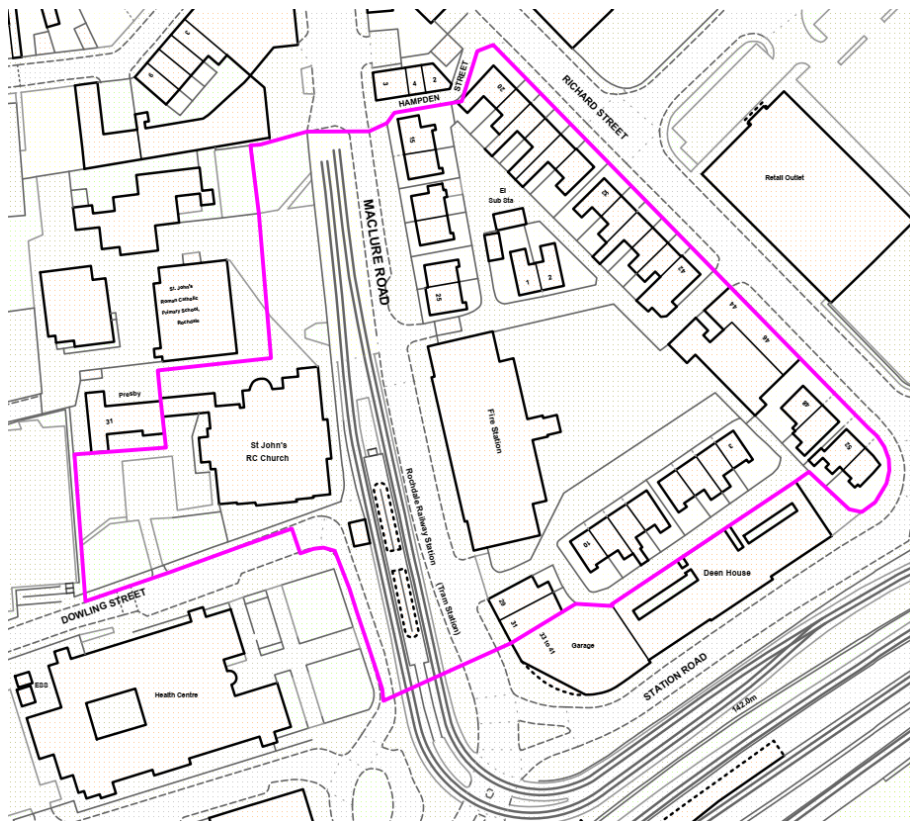
- 3.7 To east is the short terrace of 2-storey homes on Fire Station Yard, the closest property to the rear of the site being No.10. Homes orientate north-south with small gardens to south and entrance to north of the private road.
- 3.8 To south east and backing onto a shared access beyond the gardens is Deen House that fronts Station Road to south. Built as an employment exchange in the early 20th century it is a simple low brick-built building with projecting central range and lower, simplified wings with stone detailing. It is a local non-designated asset. [See Heritage Statement for further detail]. The building is in use a community arts and learning centre, Al Wasilah. The building has had some insensitive window alterations and security shutters fixed to its frontage.
- 3.9 To the south is Rochdale Railway Station which is carried on a viaduct running east-west. There is a ramp access road, High Level Road, that carries the Metrolink line up to the railway between the site / Station Road and the station / rail lines. The station entrance is low, unremarkable modern structure leading to the platforms above and also provides a pedestrian route south beyond the railway. The station buildings at platform level and its canopies are visible but also unremarkable and functional in appearance. The station is also a local non-designated asset which is assumed references its role in the mid-19th century
- 3.10 To west the existing arrival space is a wide junction with multiple running lanes, pedestrian refuges, signage, Metrolink lines and catenary supports. It is a confusing mess and subject to an approved improvement scheme for 2024 to remove a significant amount of highway infrastructure and vehicular access.
- 3.11 Beyond is the part single / two-storey Haji cash & carry buildings which is now permanently shuttered toward the square and provides little visual interest. To its north, across Lower Tweedale Street, the modern 4-storey Nye Bevan House which operates as a community health centre. Pedestrian access is taken off its eastern elevation which is set back within a simple landscaped frontage.
- 3.12 North of the junction of Dowling Street and Maclure Road sits the RC Church of St John the Baptist (Grade II* Listed). It is an impressive early 20th century ecclesiastical design of the early Christian byzantine style with cruciform plan, large, ferro concrete dome and barrel vaults. It is in red brick with artificial stone dressing. [Heritage Statement provides

more detail and of its listing]. Architect, Oswald Hill, was a WW1 casualty and the church is one of few examples of his work and is considered architecturally significant.

- 3.13 More detail on the description of the area and its buildings, including heritage significance, can be found in the Design & Access Statement and Heritage Statement supporting the application.

Maclure Road Conservation Area

- 3.14 The Conservation Area extends to the north of the site encompassing the buildings Nos.29-31 within its boundary as described earlier. The Conservation Area is focused on Maclure Road, the RC church, fire station and associated buildings per the extract below. Further detail is provided in the Heritage Statement.
- 3.15 The application site partly lies within the Conservation Area and forms part of its setting.



Relevant Planning History

- 3.16 Pertinent to the application proposals are three former applications, two granted and the most recent withdrawn.

06/248214 Granted

- 3.17 Application 06/248214 was granted permission in 2007 for the erection of 6-storey building, with part 4-storey block to Station Road, to provide 15 apartments at Nos.33-41 Maclure Road with ground floor commercial use. The Committee Report Minutes from 23rd January 2007 record that officer support was given following a reduction in scale of the building from the originally submitted 8-storeys which overcame the reasons for refusal that had been put forward that, in the report minutes, would *“significantly reduce the effect of the building on the residents at the rear of the site whilst retaining a pleasing architectural feature fronting Maclure road. In view of this there is a change from the recommendation on the application ... to approve.”*
- 3.18 The planning consideration of potential impact on existing residential amenity by reason of scale and height resonates with this application though the scale and mass of the 6-storey element was less than proposed in this scheme.
- 3.19 The decision also provides precedent for consideration of impact on matters of heritage to what was then the very recently designated Maclure Road Conservation Area (designated 2006), as well as impact on setting of heritage assets, notably the Grade II* Listed RC Church. The original committee report provides the conservation officers views on the original 8-storey scheme which was;
- “- the height of the proposed building is excessive in terms of the street scene and would detract from the setting of buildings within the adjacent Conservation Area and also the listed St Johns RC Church nearby. If the building were lowered in height by one or two storeys it would be acceptable. Red brick should be utilised rather than orange.”*
- 3.20 Clearly between publication of the committee report and the meeting the applicant took heed of these (and other comments) in reducing the scale by two storeys which is in line with the views of the conservation officer.
- 3.21 One final point of interest in the committee meeting held on 7th January 2007 is that same meeting considered and approved the development of the 4-storey building, Nye Bevan House, to the west and adjacent to the RC Church. This means the context in



which the decision of the apartment building was taken included this future building, and an understanding of a dynamic, changing townscape.

10/D53101

- 3.22 This application was a renewal of permission 06/248214 granted in September 2010. The permission expired unimplemented in May 2013. The permission adds nothing more to issues explored in the prior application other than the council found no reason not to renew the permission.

17/01443/OUT

- 3.23 The proposal was for a 6-storey apartment building for 29 apartments with ground floor commercial uses. The supporting statement refers to pre-application advice from officers to support the indicative layout and principle of development. The application was withdrawn we understand following the progress on the wider Station Gateway masterplan and the sale of the site to Rochdale Development Agency.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 As submitted planning permission is sought for:

“Demolition of 33-41 Maclure Road and partial demolition at rear of 29-31 Maclure Road and Conversion of 29-31 Maclure Road and Erection of a 6-storey building to provide 38 apartments (Use Class C3) across combined upper floors with ground floor commercial use (Use Classes E(a), E(b), E(c) and E(e)), associated infrastructure and ancillary works.”

- 4.2 Retained buildings 29-31 Maclure Road, commonly known as the ‘Chicken Shaq’ building in reference to the ground floor operator, will see partial demolition of outriggers and extensions at the rear with alterations and repairs to the fabric of the building to permit conversion at first and second floor into residential apartment use. The ground floor will be reconfigured to form new commercial floorspace and ancillary facilities.
- 4.3 The new curved façade, 6-storey building will replace 33-41 Maclure Road, currently a single-storey commercial building subdivided into units. The ground floor will provide commercial floorspace, linked internally to refurbished nos.29-31, and separate residential entrance and ancillary facilities. Upper floors will be in residential apartment use, linked on first and second floors to nos.29-31, to operate as a single entity.
- 4.4 Externally the new building will be predominantly in a red facing brick with detailing to ground floor and in banding and other details in a sandstone colour / finish to echo the character and materiality of nos.29-31. The 5th floor roof level of the new building will be set back and a metallic or anodised panel finish. Other detailing includes chamfered returns on the new build, banding, headers and cills.
- 4.5 Up to 4 commercial units are ground floor with a combined floorspace of 342.9 sqm is proposed to open out onto the station square. The units will be limited internally to under 100 sqm, though can be linked by fire door access. This is because to enlarge the floorspace will require more substantial sprinkler tank to meet current fire regulations which would render impossible the delivery of residential access to upper floors, plus support services.
- 4.6 Building design incorporates attainment of LETI Net Zero Carbon in Operation and SAP10 Net Zero Carbon in Design (NZCiD) through implementation of high-



performance building materials, low air permeability, and a number of energy-efficient and renewable technologies.

- 4.7 No parking will be provided.
- 4.8 Cycle parking for 38 bikes in a ground floor store will be provide for all apartment residents with separate street access.
- 4.9 Communal bin stores and other ancillary uses will be provided at ground floor with separate street access.
- 4.10 No amenity space is formed on site with only apartments on the roof, 5th floor level, with access to a modest roof terrace.

5 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 5.1 The following national and local policies and guidance are considered of relevance to the determination of the proposal.

National

- 5.2 National Planning Policy Framework was update in September 2023 and it is supported by Planning Practice Guidance, updated since 2014. We emphasise the following matters in context of the proposals.

- Framework section 2 sets out that sustainable development, which has social, economic and environmental objectives, should be pursued in a positive way and is that the heart of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11.
- Framework paragraph 60 sets out the continuing objective to significantly boost the supply of homes, a matter to which we would add there is a national crisis. Section 5 sets out that a range of size, type and tenure will be needed to meet different housing needs, including affordable homes. Paragraph 65 sets out at least 10% of homes in major developments (10 or more units) should be affordable with certain exemptions, including proposals that *(a) provides solely Build to Rent homes*.
- Framework paragraph 69 emphasises the importance smaller and medium sized sites can play in providing homes, including brownfield land within urban areas.
- Framework section 8 promotes the achievement of healthy, inclusive and safe communities. This is more than just a physical development and its attributes, but promotion of social interaction, street layouts to allow connectivity, active street frontages, safety in public and private spaces and support to healthy lifestyles (paragraph 92).
- Framework section 9 promotes sustainable transport which includes opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use (paragraph 104), focusing development in locations that are accessible by a genuine choice of transport modes (paragraph 105), and to take into account such factors in application of parking standards in new residential development, particularly in town centres to optimise development density (paragraphs 107 and 108).

- Framework section 11 seeks the effective use of land, including matters of achieving appropriate density (paragraph 124). Framework paragraph 120 part (c) gives substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes.
- Framework paragraph 121 directs that local planning authorities; *“should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them.”* This applies to the application site which has been taken into the control of Rochdale Development Agency for the purpose regeneration to support delivery of the Rochdale Station Area SPD adopted in 2021.
- Framework section 12 advises that; *“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable 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.”*

Local

- 5.3 The adopted development plan comprises the Core Strategy (2016) (“CS”) and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (2006) (“UDP”).
- 5.4 Emerging policies in the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone (202-) (“PfE”) are a material consideration, though weight to apply is limited given the continuing examination process which at time of preparation of this report was consulting on main modifications. Though a site of strategic importance locally in the Rochdale Station Area SPD the emerging PfE is of limited relevance to the proposals.

Core Strategy

- 5.5 The Spatial Vision of the borough in 2028 (section 3) includes ambition to be an attractive, vibrant and thriving place for people to want to live, work, visit and do business. Part of delivering on that vision is through providing more desirable housing, create distinctive places of character, transforming Inner Rochdale through regeneration and capitalising on proximity to rail and Metrolink connections.

5.6 Relevant strategic objectives and policies of the Core Strategy are considered to include:

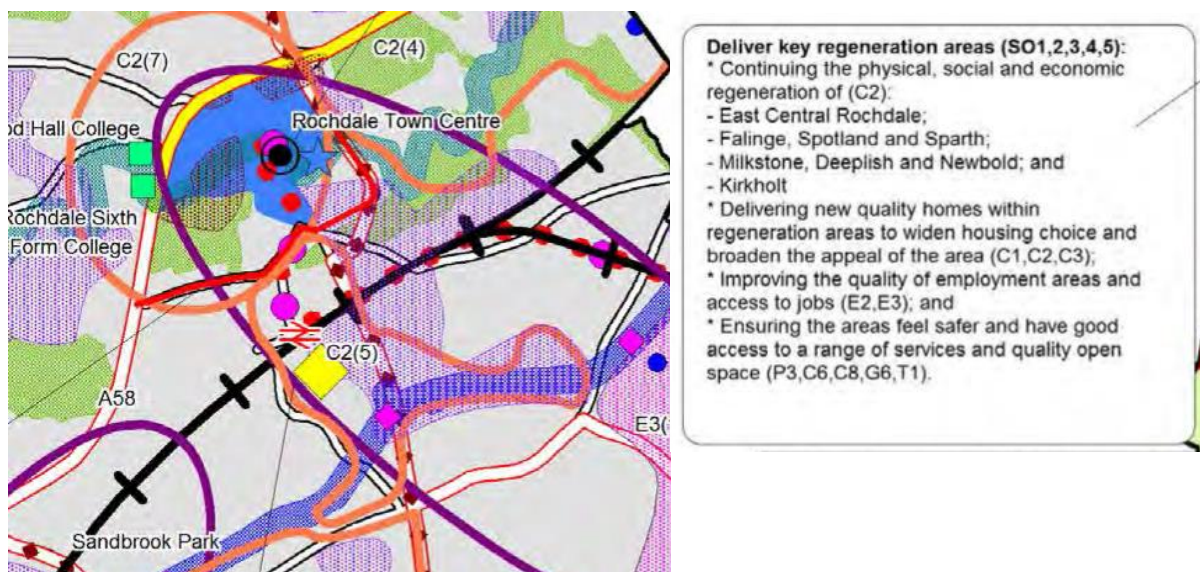
Spatial objectives

- SO1 – To deliver a more prosperous economy
 - In particular parts (2) to establish an attractive town centre and (6) building on the borough's assets and improving its image to attract investment
- SO2 – To create successful and health communities
 - Focus on delivering well-designed housing with growth in regeneration areas
- SO3 – To improve design, image and quality of place
 - Focus on improving gateways into the borough and main transport corridors to improve the image of the borough, creating new identity
- SO4 – To promote a greener environment
 - Specifically part (2) to contribute to energy efficiency and carbon reduction
- SO5 – To improve accessibility and deliver sustainable transport
 - Specifically part (1) to direct development to the most accessible locations

Policies

- SP1 – Rochdale borough's role in the city region
 - Linking to strategic objectives part (a) promotes making the borough an attractive place to live, and part (c) providing improved housing choice
- SP2 – The Spatial Strategy for the borough
 - Meaning focusing most new housing, investment and improvements to Rochdale town centre, economic growth corridors, regeneration areas and key corridors and gateways in context of the site. Linked to CS policy SP3/R The Strategy for Rochdale and policy C2 (5) Milkstone, Deepdish & Newbold regeneration area encompassing the station gateway.
- SP3/R – The Strategy for Rochdale / Deliver key regeneration areas

- Specifically Milkstone, Deeplish & Newbold (CS policy C2) regeneration area, delivering new quality homes to widen choice and broaden the appeal of the area (linked policies C1, C2 and C3)
- SP3/R – The Strategy for Rochdale / Deliver a high quality station gateway
 - Specifically promoting high quality, high density development that improves the local townscape and builds on the local character and heritage value of the area (linked policies P1, P2 and P3)



Extract Core Strategy, Figure 11 Strategy for map for Rochdale

- C1 – Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places
 - Seeks 460 dpa delivery as part of a rolling 5-year supply, linking to focus homes in sustainable locations (1a), regeneration areas (1b) and growth corridors (1c)
- C2 – Focusing on regeneration areas and economic growth corridors / areas
 - Milkstone, Deeplish & Newbold – (5a) *Provide additional homes on vacant and underused sites and through redeveloping incompatible employment uses in residential areas.*
 - Rochdale town centre – (8b) *Maximise opportunities for new residential development in and around the town centre.*

- Supporting paragraph 8.17 sets out that SPDs, masterplans and development briefs will be produced where appropriate to direct regeneration.
- C3 – Delivering the right type of housing
 - *Ensure new development provides housing types that take account of local needs and aspirations;*
 - *Ensure that the supply of larger and higher value housing in the borough is improved;*
 - *Require a high standard of design and layout that produces attractive places and takes account of energy efficiency and climate change;*
Promote densities that make efficient use of land whilst delivering a range of housing to widen choice in the borough and reflect local character;
 - Within the south of the borough the focus will be *in widening housing choice and delivering housing that better suits the needs of existing future residents*, and to achieve this the council will; (1d) *Focus higher density development in and around Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood town centres, [and] along major transport corridors ...*
- C4 – Providing affordable homes
 - Seeks provision on sites of 15 units or more at a rate of 7.5% of sales value, with exceptions set out in part (b) for potential financial in lieu or in part (c) exception in full including matters (iii) *the need to deliver other planning objectives with a higher priority*; and (iv) *the economic viability of the development*.
 - Policy C4 pre-dates Framework (2023) and revision to national approach to provision of affordable housing set out in paragraphs 63 to 65 which sets out a lower threshold of 10 units and additional exceptions to provision including homes solely for Built to Rent (paragraph 65).
- P1 – Improving image
 - High quality design is expected in all development, but particularly important in (1) key gateways to the borough, i.e. Rochdale station, and (5) prominent sites and regeneration areas.

- Actions to promote high quality design include (d) promoting the development and reuse of under-used land and buildings
- Supporting paragraph 9.9 comments that; *“Some prominent sites and public areas in the borough are not successful because they have no clear function, are not inviting places and are not well used. We therefore want to ensure that public areas are well defined and relate to the buildings and uses around them.”*
To illustrate the benefit of clear function and defined public areas Nye Bevan House is illustrated after paragraph 9.9, entitled “Encouraging active and healthy communities through new or improved facilities.”
- P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
 - Policy promotes protection and enhancement of the borough’s character, distinctiveness and quality; utilising the potential of such assets in regeneration, including statutory and non-statutory heritage assets.
- P3 – Improving design of new development
 - High standards of design are sought in all development with relevant factors to the site including enhancing the borough’s identity; having regard to scale, density, massing and height; respecting surrounding townscape, buildings and heritage assets; providing an appropriate use (mix); promote sustainable transport choice / living; buildings that are adaptable to future needs; respect impacts of climate change and low emissions.
- G1 – Tackling and adapting to climate change
 - Policy interacts with others in locating growth in areas that may minimise the need to travel and well served by public transport, services and infrastructure; promoting renewable energy and reduce carbon emission; and incorporate sustainable drainage principles as can be secured on a site.
- G2 – Energy and new development
 - Seeks all development to adhere to the energy hierarchy set out to reduce energy demand by design (first), improve energy efficiency (second) and apply allowable solutions to compensate for residual emissions (third).

- DM1 – General development requirements
 - Policy sets out a range of general criteria (a) to (m) as may apply to any development proposal. This includes matters of (a) design quality; (b) compatibility with surrounding land uses; (c) amenity; (d) mitigation for emissions of noise, air, dust, light and odour; (e) parking provision and servicing; (f) health impact; (g) services and community infrastructure; (h) crime impact; (i) contamination; (j) landscape; (k) ground instability; (l) water / wastewater infrastructure and (m) habitat / species conservation.
- DM2 – Delivering planning contributions and infrastructure
 - For residential development (2) there is potential for requirements to be sought in support of affordable housing (policy C4), open space provision (C5), health (C6), education (C7) and community facilities (C8). We address this later in this statement.
 - All developments may additionally be required to provide toward matters related to offsite highway improvements, biodiversity, greenspace infrastructure, flood risk prevention, noise / air quality management, etc.

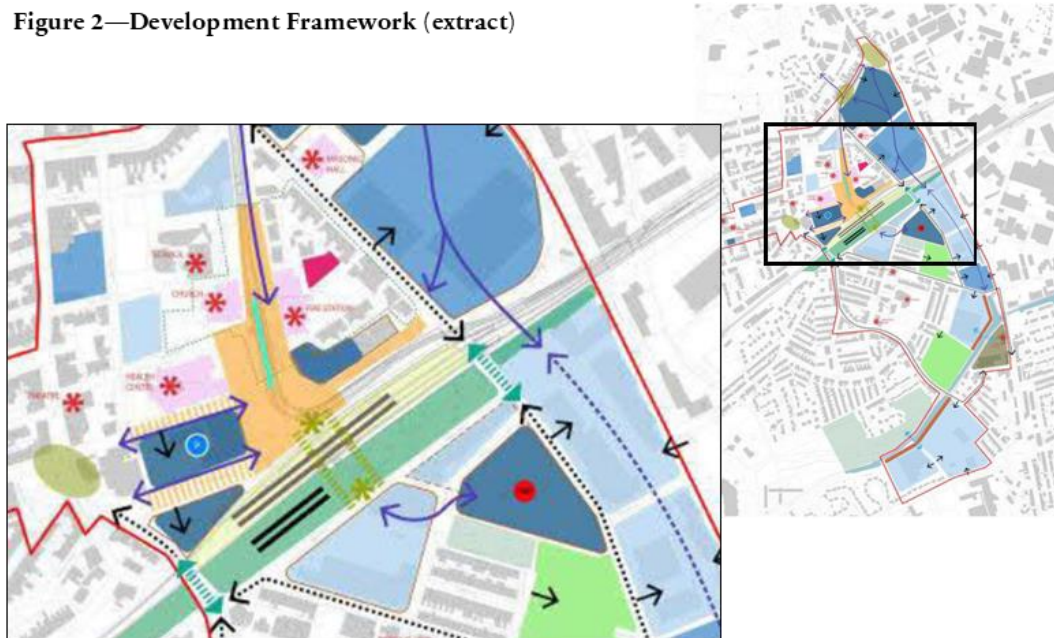
5.7 The above listed policies are considered as relevant to the proposals but are not presented as an exhaustive list.

Rochdale Station Area SPD (2021)

- 5.8 Recently adopted the Rochdale Station Area SPD is a key document in leading the regeneration of this part of the wider Milkstone, Deeplish & Newbold regeneration area under CS policies SP3/R and C2 in particular. The SPD states it is designed to inform development over a 10-year plus period.
- 5.9 Figure 2 – Development Framework (extract reproduced over page) highlights the Station Gateway and area for improved public realm at the station entrance, now subject to approved designs for implementation in 2024. The application site is identified as a short term development opportunity as part of delivering on the masterplan potential.
- 5.10 The SPD emphasises that within Maclure Road the landmarks of the RC Church and Fire Station remain dominant despite existing street clutter, and maintaining primacy of the heritage assets within the new public space will be a key to its success. Historically Maclure Road was laid out specifically to connect the station and town (see Heritage Statement) and the masterplan is reclaiming the role for the street.

- 5.11 We can record at Figure 8 that emerging PpE guidance is for a minimum 120 dwellings per hectare density in new development in designated town centres considered applicable to the site.

Figure 2—Development Framework (extract)



- 5.12 At Figure 10 public realm strategy three key principles are set out to create a welcoming and outward looking sense of place; a series of interconnected spaces on well overlooked streets; and a pedestrian and cycle focussed public realm. This leads onto the Heights Strategy, which sets out that;

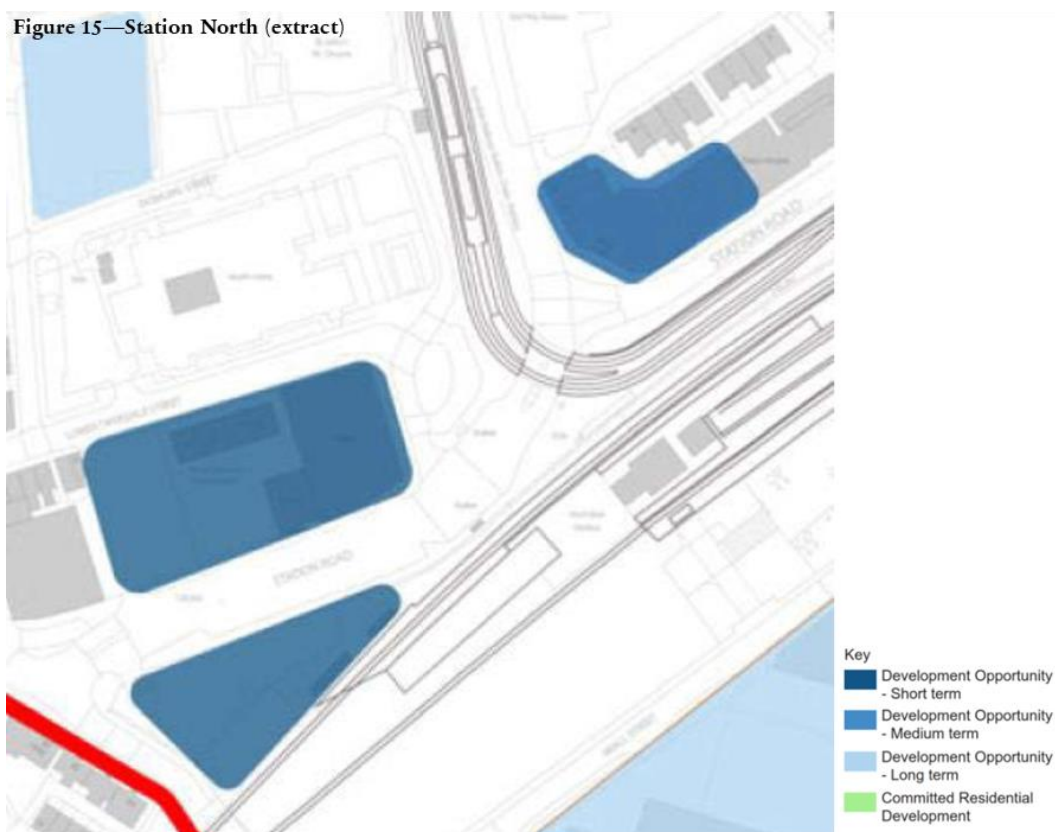
The building heights strategy aims to generate a medium rise area that shifts in scale and building typology responding to the context. Any development proposal should be supported by a full understanding of heritage significance in order to help achieve the overall vision.

- 5.13 Key aspirations include;

5-6 storey development should primarily comprise of 3-4 storey with strategic locations for additional height, including areas where there is underlying landform and low topography, or architectural moments at landmark corners - these zones could be flattened blocks or mixed-use development with ground floor areas allocated to non-residential uses.

- 5.14 We emphasise here that the application site is an identified landmark corner which becomes appropriate for additional height, and the development proposal follows the concept of residential over a ground floor commercial / non-residential use.

- 5.15 Drilling down in the SPD, the application site is identified as part of the Station Quarter (Figure 14). Development principles for this quarter include formation of Station Square as a high quality arrival / departure area; highest density development and providing an appropriate setting to the high quality historic buildings. Design around the station will be expected to demonstrate how it understands and takes account of form, context, hierarchy, scale and proportion and the new Station Square.
- 5.16 Figure 15 – Station North (extract below) identifies again the application site and development opportunities to the west at the Worldwide Foods / Haji site and land south of Station Road.



- 5.17 The application site is referred to in the SPD as part of the “Fire Station Block”. It sets out that the masterplan proposals include the redevelopment of the single storey building on the corner for *high density residential with retail and commercial uses on the ground floor*. The SPD refers to the building footprint to be increased and to align with the current buildings lines to increase scheme viability.
- 5.18 Overall the Fire Station Block aims to create a high quality, coherent, active and attractive mixed use area as part of the station approach. And since the SPD adoption part of that

aim has been achieved in the formation of the workspace on the first floor of the Fire Station and investment in the ground floor museum and café.

- 5.19 SPD states that; *“Any improvements that enhance the image, visual appearance and safety of the area will be encouraged. All new developments will be expected to create a strong visual frontage to the Square. Any new development should be well designed and be sensitive to the characteristics of the conservation area. Each development should help to contribute to a higher quality aspirational streetscape to further enrich active frontage on Station Road ...”*
- 5.20 It continues; *“Any future development proposals should refer to The Central Rochdale Historic Areas Assessment (HAA) prepared by Historic England (Research Report Series no. 56-2019).”*
- 5.21 And that; *“Development will be expected to make use of better quality materials and provide improvements to the public realm area. Any new development will be expected to maintain and enhance activity at ground floor level. This will be through good quality design, natural surveillance from ‘eyes on the street’; as well as including well-designed and inviting entrances, creating an open and diverse area and a gateway to the town; and mixed commercial development to facilitate future needs.”*

6 ANALYSIS

Principle of development

- 6.1 This is a development proposal on brownfield land within the urban area for residential-led, mixed use development. The number of homes provided will be 38 one and two bedroom apartments. Up to four commercial units will be provided at ground floor.
- 6.2 Part of the site, 33-41 Maclure Road, is identified within the Brownfield Register (2019) for potential housing development.
- 6.3 The site and location are identified within the Rochdale Station Area SPD (2021) as a short-term development opportunity, as a landmark location for a building of height at the station square, which is itself subject to an approved scheme of regeneration to improve the experience of arriving and leaving from the station.
- 6.4 The SPD gives voice to the broader Core Strategy policies SP2, SP3/R and C2 in particular to inform deliver of development over a 10-year period within the Milkstone, Deeplish & Newbold area, which includes *inter alia* 1,500 new homes to house 3,500 people around the station area, new public square and promotion of living and working close to stations as part of efforts to lower carbon footprints and promote sustainable living and transport choices.
- 6.5 The site is located in one of the most sustainable locations in the town and borough at its main railway station, on tram and bus routes, and within walking distance of the town centre, its shops, services and facilities.
- 6.6 As a matter of principle the development accords with multiple strategic objectives of the Core Strategy to create a successful and healthy communities (SO2), promote a greener environment (SO3) and provides new homes accessible by a range of sustainable transport (SO5). It builds on the policies SP1, SP2 and SP3 to promote and support the role of the Borough and spatial strategy to see regeneration and new homes within the urban area, raising the profile and aspiration to urban living.
- 6.7 Emerging strategic policy in Places for Everyone (2021) supports the principle of development of sites within / around town centres for residential use to increase population density in places accessible to services, transport, etc. (Objectives 1, 2, 6, 10

and emerging policies JP Strat 12, JP S1 and JP H1). The emerging policies may still attract only limited weight but give clear support to the application objective.

- 6.8 Framework (2023) paragraph 60 sets out Government policy is to significantly boost the supply of housing, a central tenant of policy since inception 2012 and speaks to an on-going housing crisis nationally to build sufficient homes to meet needs. Development that gives rise to access to high quality new housing is a matter of economic and social importance to be given substantial weight in decision-making.
- 6.9 Framework paragraph 120 (c) requires planning policies and decisions to give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes.
- 6.10 Framework paragraph 121 directs that local planning authorities; *“should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them.”* Both on the brownfield register and in public ownership¹ the site should be supported for meeting housing needs in line with adopted policies.
- 6.11 Overall, and subject to further detail on matters of design, regeneration policy, amenity and sustainability which are turned to below, the development is without doubt a highly sustainable development in principle under adopted local plan, supplementary planning document and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.12 The matters of reuse of brownfield land, effective use of land in public ownership, the delivery of new housing and development in accordance with key principles of the adopted development plan are matters of planning significance to which substantial weight should be given in each case.

Regeneration

- 6.13 Core Strategy policies SP2, SP3/R and C2 identify the application site within the Milkstone, Deeplish & Newbold regeneration area. Policy C2 (5a) seeks to focus regeneration and economic growth on vacant and underused sites within the area, and (8) to focus residential development in Rochdale town centre. Supporting CS para.8.17 sets

¹ 29-31 Maclure Road is in conveyancing at time of writing to transfer to RDA control; 33-41 Maclure Road is in the control of RDA.

out SPD and masterplans will be used to appropriately direct development in the area; i.e. the Rochdale Station Area SPD adopted in 2021.

- 6.14 The Rochdale Station Area SPD, 2021, aims to inform development over a 10-year period to regenerate the wider area. As SPD that has been consulted upon and embodies core strategy policy it can be afford weight in decision-making.
- 6.15 The SPD aligns with post-CS adopted strategy for the Calder Rail Corridor, promoted by the Council, which includes *inter alia* 1,500 new homes around Rochdale station to house 3,500 people; a new public square at the station; and promotion of living and working adjacent to stations to reduce carbon emissions though greater use of public transport, cycling and walking.
- 6.16 SPD Vision (1.2) sets out 7 priorities:
- *Promote the station as a gateway experience creating a new gateway public square outside the station that enhances the arrival experience to Rochdale towns;*
 - *Create a place that has a distinct, vibrant and authentic identity that places people at the centre to celebrate and build upon the strong local communities and heritage;*
 - *Establish a clear hierarchy of movement and access, centred on a transit hub for the future, that is accessible for everyone to navigate to and from;*
 - *Promote a high quality, high residential led development around the station that is complimented by a mix of land uses that create a flexible and resilient community that further supports and drives the economic growth of Rochdale;*
 - *Provide uses that create vibrancy and activity throughout the day, evenings and weekend;*
 - *A 'place led' approach built around Streets for All; and*
 - *To promote healthy living and to support the viability of existing and new businesses.*
- 6.17 The development proposals will support key aspects of the Vision through formation of the gateway experience and arrival; provide new homes; draw people and vibrancy to build a community; create activity throughout the day, evenings and weekends by increasing resident population; promote healthy living; and, above all the development will provide a high-quality, high-density residential-led development around the station to further the growth of Rochdale.

- 6.18 Within the SPD the site is specifically identified as a short-term, deliverable development opportunity at the station gateway as part of the ‘Fire Station Block’ with specific reference to redevelopment of the single-storey corner building into; *“high density residential with retail and commercial uses on the ground floor.”* The words echoing the Vision.
- 6.19 That density is given voice in the Heights Strategy, which sets out; *“Any development proposal should be supported by a full understanding of heritage significance in order to help achieve the overall vision.”* And key aspirations on height is 5-6 storey development should be found at ‘architectural moments at landmark corners’ using flatted developments with non-residential ground floor uses. The application site is one such landmark corner, a realisation shown in the visualisations that form part of the SPD and its consultation process to adoption.
- 6.20 Design merit and understanding of heritage significance are separately considered below, suffice to draw the conclusion here, that on the basis of demonstrating that understanding that the proposed development squarely delivers on the Vision of the SPD and its regeneration ambition for the site at the key arrival point of the station gateway. Therefore supportive of and by Core Strategy policies SP2, SP3/R and C2. This is a matter of significance and attracts substantial weight in support of the proposals.
- 6.21 We would add that as one of the first such sites to be delivered in support of the SPD it will also set a benchmark for the quality and pace of delivery of the wider station gateway and its regeneration objectives, a matter to which additional weight should be given.

Housing

- 6.22 The proposal will deliver 38 one and two bedroom apartments. It is targeted to appeal to younger professional households taking advantage of the station location for commuting to / from Manchester and those looking for more urban living with excellent access to shops, services and facilities in central Rochdale.
- 6.23 The proposal will deliver high quality homes that will change perceptions of what type of property is available locally, which are predominantly two-storey terraces with some flats over shops or in converted homes. The new development will be a statement of intent for the Station Gateway area and benchmark for further redevelopment around the station. It will complement recently approved development at the former Central Retail Park.

- 6.24 No affordable housing is proposed. The proposals require public subsidy to bridge a funding gap to deliver the scheme and there is the higher priority policy objective to delivery on the regeneration objectives. Both factors under Policy C4 to allow setting aside affordable housing need.
- 6.25 Text box (over page) sets out our Affordable Housing Statement on Policy C4 points.
- 6.26 To summarise the proposal will deliver on the regeneration objective to see the development of an important, landmark gateway site supported by the Staton Gateway SPD and policy SP3/R, that in turn supports strategic objectives on the economy (SO1) and communities (SO2) and policies C1, C3 and P1. As such there is a clear exception under policy C4 factor iii. that this proposal shall deliver other planning objectives with a higher priority, namely regeneration. And there is a further exception, evidenced separately by the RDA of a funding gap leading to exception under policy C4, factor iv.
- 6.27 We would add that emerging strategic policy through Places for Everyone, also supports promotion of a wider mix of housing, greater prosperity and investment into communities per emerging policies JP Strat 12 and JP H1; and Objectives 1 (housing needs), 2 (creating neighbourhoods of choice), 5 (reducing inequalities) and 10 (building healthy communities).
- 6.28 Provision of new, high quality housing is a matter to which substantial weight should be given. And that weight is not diminished by absence of affordable housing which is exempted under two policy strands in the circumstances of this proposal.

Sustainability

- 6.29 In July 2019 Rochdale Council declared a Climate Emergency and that it was the responsibility of all who live and work in the borough to take action. Action includes development management decisions, meaning seeking best practice on carbon net zero, use of renewable energy sources, reducing the need and frequency of travel (especially by private car) through spatial land use and promotion of the reuse and regeneration of brownfield land.
- 6.30 As set out in the brief to the Design & Access Statement, the proposal seeks to be a carbon net zero in design to reduce its carbon footprint for future residential and commercial uses. The site is located in the very definition of a sustainable location for development, accessible by train, tram and bus with connections to key destinations including

Affordable Housing Statement

Framework paragraph 65 expects all major housing development to make at least 10% of the total number of affordable homes provide available for affordable home ownership, unless to do so would exceed the local level of need, or significantly prejudice the ability of meeting identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. Neither exception applies. Paragraph 65 continues to set out three further exemptions from this 10% rule, including (a) where a proposal is solely for Build to Rent homes which does apply in this proposal. However, no affordable housing is proposed per Core Strategy Policy C4.

Core Strategy Policy C4 – Providing Affordable Homes applies to the site. It directs schemes exceeding 15 homes should provide an affordable housing contribution of 7.5% of the development sales value of the overall scheme. This should be provided onsite with the type, size, tenure to be agreed based on local evidenced need and potential registered provided; or, off site via financial contribution. The policy sets out 4 factors that will be taken into account when negotiating an appropriate level of affordable housing provision:

- i. The type of affordable housing required in the area;*
- ii. The availability of Social Housing Grant or equivalent;*
- iii. The need to deliver other planning objectives with a higher priority; and*
- iv. The economic viability of the development.*

In this proposal the third and fourth factors are uppermost in consideration.

Factor 3, the site location at the Station Gateway (and SPD guidance) places a greater importance on its delivery than simply the provision of housing as part of the mixed housing and commercial development. The Rochdale Station Area SPD supports and applies relevant Core Strategy policy to deliver new high quality homes to widen housing choice and broaden the appeal of the area, linked to strategic objectives SO1, 2, 3,4 & 5 and policies C1, C2 and C3. This strategy does not preclude affordable housing in such mix, but affordable housing need not be provided in all cases where there is a need to bring about change in perceptions and values in the local housing market, which we say is the case here.

Factor 4, economic viability is engaged because the site is being promoted by Rochdale Development Agency on council owned (or shortly to be acquired property in case of 29/31 Maclure Road). There is a funding gap, evidence by the separate submission by the RDA, to enable the delivery of this project which will require public investment through Brownfield Fund Grant. Because of this funding gap there is no ability to provide further financial contribution toward affordable housing.

On the basis of the third and fourth factors, no affordable housing is proposed

commuting to Manchester, and also within walking and cycling distance of a full range of facilities and services including the town centre. As set out in the preceding section on regeneration the proposal promotes social interaction and healthy living.

- 6.31 Energy Statement, prepared by TACE, provides further details including explanation of two separate standards on carbon reduction – LETI Net Zero Carbon in Operation and SAP10 Net Zero Carbon in Design (NZCiD). The design objective being to achieve both through implementation of high-performance building materials, low air permeability, and a number of energy-efficient and renewable technologies. This covers air source heat pumps for domestic hot water, mechanical ventilation and heat recovery capabilities. Options for roof mounted photovoltaic cells for electricity generation will be incorporated too.
- 6.32 The proposal accords with Framework objectives to promote sustainable development in a positive way; to promote sustainable transport choice and to form safe, healthy communities that promote social interaction. The proposal specifically supports CS policies G1 Tackling & Adapting to Climate Change and G2 Energy in New Development.
- 6.33 Supporting sustainable development objectives, social and health outcome and reduced carbon emissions is a matter of significance to which substantial weight should be given in support of the proposals.

Design

- 6.34 Leach Rhodes Walker ('LRW') as architect has prepared a Design & Access Statement, drawings and illustrations in support of the proposals. Its brief has been to *deliver a proposal for high-quality new residential homes in the form of carbon net zero apartments, enveloped in a bold and contextual design, on a key focal site opposite the train station in Rochdale.*
- 6.35 The proposal replaces the existing single-storey commercial unit with a 6-storey building presenting a curved façade to the back edge of the pavement, a strong visual form to command the corner and gateway location. The design divides the building mass into a base, middle and roof level, with different material and elevation treatments and set back at the roof level behind a pediment with railings reducing the visual scale. The middle section uses 2-storey window openings and vertical lines to break the up the façade and

uses banding and arches over the 2nd floor windows to reflect the adjoining 29-31 Maclure Road.

- 6.36 The main material finish is high-quality brickwork in a red tone with stone detailing to complement the adjoining 29-31 Maclure Road and the prevailing materiality of the area to north. At ground floor the stone detail and panels with glazing to commercial units serves to ‘ground the building’ and provide a flow around the corner. At roof level a metallic or anodised panel to complement the red brick tone.
- 6.37 Detailing includes aforementioned banding and arches to 2nd floor window, but also curved return on the façade adjoining 31 Maclure Road to reveal its stone quoin detail and to add visual separation to the existing and new buildings. Curved return details are continued in upper floors and the shaping of the roof level and to the Station Road frontage and return alongside Deen House. The return to Deen House has been further activated by windows to enliven the elevation viewed over the roof of Deen House’s western wing.
- 6.38 Externally the design treatment is continued to the rear elevations of the building with no lessening in the use of banding, two-window lifts and vertical line detailing.
- 6.39 Internally the ground floor will accommodate up to 4 units, sized to fall under 100 sqm each. Though units can be linked, fire door separation is required as to merge the floorspace would require a significantly large sprinkler tank installation which could not be accommodated at ground floor without compromise to the residential entrance, support facilities and the commercial uses to meet the brief.
- 6.40 Use of the commercial units is sought flexibly within Class E with exceptions that can be agreed through planning condition. One such flexibility will be to exclude hot food takeaway to remove need / harm extract ventilation would cause.
- 6.41 Residential access is arranged off Station Road alongside separate cycle and bin store access. Refuse collection will be kerbside given the inadequacy of the rear access.
- 6.42 The remainder of the ground floor provides residential lobby, lift and stair core access to apartments above and support services contained to the rebuilt rear of 29-31 Maclure Road and the new building.

- 6.43 Upper floors 1 and 2 will accommodate 9 apartments within the new building and converted space, with 7 apartments on floors 3 and 4 and 6 on the roof level in the new building. The overall housing mix is 23 one-bedroom and 15 two-bedroom apartments. Other than the roof level with access to a small terrace, the apartments on lower level will have no balcony space provision.
- 6.44 All homes will meet Nationally Designed Space Standards (NDSS).
- 6.45 In addition to the positive design elements it should not be lost sight of that the proposal will also remove the visual harm caused by the existing single-storey commercial building. Built as a car showroom in the 1950s the years and subdivision into separate units has not been kind and it currently presents an unattractive and underwhelming welcome to Rochdale from the railway station.
- 6.46 Overall the design quality, the embedded net zero carbon approach, the careful treatment of façade sections and use of materials forms a coherent, strong design that can command the street corner and Station Gateway as demanded by the original brief and policy guidelines. It will create a strong design precedent for the long-term regeneration of the area as a high-quality built environment.
- 6.47 The proposal thereby supports the Core Strategy objective SO3 to improve design, image and quality of space; policies P1 improving image and P3 improving design of new development; and the Rochdale Station Area SPD objectives to form a high-quality landmark building. It supports broader Framework objectives (section 12) that seeks the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings. And it demonstrates how such good design is a key aspect in delivering sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 6.48 The inherent design qualities of the proposal are a matter of significant planning importance and should be given substantial weight in support of the development.

Heritage

- 6.49 Nos.29-31 Maclure Road being within the Maclure Road Conservation Area (CA), designated in 2006. The existing single storey building sits adjacent to the boundary of the CA and forms part of its setting.

- 6.50 Turley has prepared a Heritage Statement in support of the development. This has been informed by pre-application discussion with Council conservation officers and Historic England.
- 6.51 Table 5.1, Heritage Statement, a summary of officer comments and response is provided confirming matters of viewpoint assessment, change in brickwork colour palette and revisited elevations. This is complemented by narrative in the Design & Access Statement.
- 6.52 Appended to the Heritage Statement are the comments from a meeting with Historic England undertaken at the request of officers. HE is supportive of the development objectives, design approach and assessment of the heritage significance of relevant heritage assets and the potential impact of the proposal. Specifically it has no adverse comment on the scale of new building as relates to the setting of the CA or to the Grade II* listed St Johns RC Church, which has been demonstrated through section analysis to be significantly below the scale of the Church and Fire Station tower. This was also a matter of concern raised by Council conservation officers in discussion to which they sought reassurance.
- 6.53 Turning to the conclusions of the Heritage Statement, it confirms that for decision-making the Council has statutory duties under s66(1) and s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the Church of St John and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Maclure Road Conservation Area. The setting of conservation areas is not protected by primary legislation; however the Framework does state that the setting of a designated heritage asset (including conservation areas) can contribute to their significance.
- 6.54 The Heritage Statement notes that since c.1900 and the laying out of Maclure Road the area has seen a significant amount of change leading to today a situation where the area is characterised by buildings of differing styles and periods, though the higher quality buildings (principally within the conservation area to the north) have a degree of coherency in their common materials and colour palettes.
- 6.55 As noted elsewhere in this Statement, the Heritage Statement too notes the site and its surroundings are part of the station gateway set out in the Rochdale Station Area SPD (2021) as part of the 'Fire Station Block' that identifies the site for redevelopment as part of the wider regeneration objectives of Council policy.

6.56 From its analysis the Heritage Statement identifies:

6.8 *A slight degree of harm has been identified in relation to the Church of St John (grade II* listed) and the Maclure Road Conservation Area due to the impact of the Proposed Development on the landmark qualities of the church and the fire station tower. NPPF Paragraph 202 is therefore engaged and the ‘less than substantial harm’ should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals. This includes the positive effects on the on the character and appearance of the conservation area arising from the enhancement to the townscape through the improvements to the Chicken Shaq building and the redevelopment of the single storey retail development with a development that is high-quality and contextual. The development will enhance the quality of the townscape within the setting of the church, removing a detracting element from its setting and the proposed curve resonates with the curve of the church dome.*

6.9 *A slight degree of harm has also been concluded in relation to fire station (locally listed) due to the effect on the landmark qualities of its tower. In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 203 a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the local significance of the asset.*

6.10 *Those elements of setting that contribute to the significance of Deen House (locally listed) (i.e. proximity to the station and the 1930s fire station) will not be affected by the development and therefore no harm to the asset’s significance has been identified.*

6.57 From the conclusions drawn from the comprehensive assessment of impact on matters of heritage importance, and acknowledging no objection raised by Historic England too, we can place the identified very slight and slight/minor harm into the planning balance, which as we turn to in section 7, is clearly outweighed by the significant public benefits of the proposals.

Amenity

6.58 Preapplication discussion with officers has largely focused on concerns to the future relationship of the proposed building and residences with the existing homes at Fire Station Yard, and the resulting amenity for existing and future residents.

6.59 The proposals will change the relationship between the Fire Station Yard terrace that sits to the rear of the site and what is currently a single-storey commercial unit that backs onto a ginnel and rear gardens. Specifically it will transform into a 6-storey apartment

building set back from the ginnel in an L-shape and present a residential façade instead of a functional back entrance and brick wall. Change at 29-31 Maclure Road will also occur with demolition and rebuilding of outriggers into a new single-storey outbuilding to the west of the terrace.

- 6.60 Because of concerns a Daylight & Sunlight Amenity Impact Assessment Report, prepared by Proximity, was commissioned to provide an objective assessment of the impact on daylight, sunlight and shadowing to understand any changes to amenity for existing residents.

Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing

- 6.61 Proximity's Assessment is based on provisions of the Building Research Establishments ('BRE') Guidance, *Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice*. As stated, though not planning policy, it provides an objective means for evaluating daylight and sunlight to living rooms, and daylight to bedrooms and kitchens. Proximity notes (para.3.3.6) that guidance was principally developed for use in assessment of low-density suburban environments and should, therefore, be applied flexibly for developments in urban city or town centre sites where greater density is sought / encouraged.
- 6.62 Flexibility in application therefore applies to this site and proposal as an inner urban location, beside the railway station and identified to receive higher density development in adopted policy and SPD guidance. However, the findings presented in the Assessment are made without applying flexibility because this is a matter for the decision-maker.
- 6.63 The matters considered in the Assessment are:
- Access to daylight to living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens (section 4.1) through (1) assessment of daylight received by vertical sky component (VSC) and theoretical capacity to naturally light rooms in an unobstructed sky; and (2) a 'no sky line' (NSL) point where sky may not be visible from within a room, i.e. once there is no visible sky that area of the room may be considered 'gloomier' – hence deeper rooms feel gloomier.
 - Access to sunlight to buildings (section 4.2) is the percentage of sunlight within daytime hours received at a façade, focused on living rooms, between 21st September and 21st March, termed "winter months" for assessment.

- Access to sunlight to external amenity space, i.e. gardens (section 4.3) using the BRE *2 Hour Time in Sun Test* which is based on daylight that could be received on 21st March (spring equinox).

6.64 Full explanation is given in the Assessment on how the sensitivity is assessed on forecast change with the development. The key factor is the assessment are relative to the baseline as a measure of change and that a change within 20% (0.8) is not considered to be noticeable. Even where a change exceeds this threshold and may be deemed noticeable this does not correlate to harm arising which, as explained above, the application of standards must be flexible in non-suburban locations for which the test evolved.

Objective assessment findings

- 6.65 Properties 3 to 10 Fire Station Yard and 48 & 50 Richard Street were assessed as identified with windows and habitable rooms facing the Site. These are the only assessed properties.
- 6.66 Table 6.1 (overpage) summaries the fuller findings in the Assessment. The terminology is that of Proximity to assign ‘not significant’, ‘minor impact’ and ‘impact respectively.’ Two conclusions are immediately apparent:
- No property will experience any harm to sunlight received to a building
 - Only two out of ten assessed properties experience any harm at all, these are nos.9 & 10 Fire Station Yard, the closest two properties to the Site.
- 6.67 As an interim conclusion we see that the objective impact of the development on daylight received to rooms, sunlight to buildings and daylight to gardens is a very localised impact relating to just two properties.

Table 6.1 – Assessed Impacts (Proximity, Section 6)

Property	Daylight amenity impact	Sunlight to buildings impact	Sunlight to external space impact
3 Fire Station Yard	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant Over 50% BRE Guidance
4 Fire Station Yard	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant Over 50% BRE Guidance
5 Fire Station Yard	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant Over 50% BRE Guidance
6 Fire Station Yard	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant Over 50% BRE Guidance
7 Fire Station Yard	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant Over 50% BRE Guidance
8 Fire Station Yard	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant Over 50% BRE Guidance
9 Fire Station Yard	Minor impact Note: main living room to front unaffected	Not significant	Not significant Over 50% BRE Guidance
10 Fire Station Yard	Minor impact Note: main living room to front unaffected	Not significant	Impact Below 50% BRE Guidance
48 Richard Street	Not significant	Not significant	Unassessed, beyond shadow range
50 Richard Street	Not significant	Not significant	Unassessed, beyond shadow range

6.68 Drilling down into the identified harm identified in the Assessment we find:

Impact on 10 Fire Station Yard

6.69 On access to daylight only minor impact is identified relating to the ground floor combined kitchen/diner (7 windows) with impact at 0.73 (27%) VSC and therefore noticeable as a reduction in daylight. However, it did not find a reduction in no sky line

(NSL), i.e. rooms did not become gloomier from a reduction in visible sky. This is because the site lies west of No.10 and not in direct line of sight from windows which are cast to the site over Deen House. No impact was identified for first floor bedroom windows to rear. Proximity describes this impact on standards as ‘minor’ noting that the main living room to front of the property is unaffected.

- 6.70 No impact was identified to sunlight to buildings as noted above.
- 6.71 Impact was identified to the rear garden reducing from baseline 86% to 26% post development of the garden receiving 2-hours sunlight ‘on the ground’ on 21st March, this is half BRE Guidance for 50%. Proximity describe this as an ‘impact.’

Impact on 9 Fire Station Yard

- 6.72 Access to daylight is noted reduced on baseline by 0.65 (35%) of VSC relating to ground floor kitchen / dining room windows, but without harm to bedroom windows at first floor. Impact on NSL shows 3 of 4 rooms experience no perceivable change, but one room, the kitchen, will receive a change over 0.8 (20%). Proximity describe this impact as ‘minor’ noting as with No.10 the main living room to front is unaffected.
- 6.73 No impact was identified to sunlight to buildings and no impact to the rear garden.

Flexibility

- 6.74 We can record that the above findings are given without any flexibility applied to standards to reflect this is an inner urban area. Should we apply flexibility we necessarily must reach a consideration of lesser harm than that reported as one cannot expect an inner urban area to provide greater access to daylight or sunlight and less overshadowing than suburban areas.

Visual intrusion and overlooking

- 6.75 Amenity is not only a factor of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing to which the Assessment evidences, but also visual intrusion and overlooking. As with daylight and sunlight we must consider flexibly where appropriate standards developed for suburban housing for an inner urban setting. And it must be recognised that private views are not protected per se through land use planning considerations.
- 6.76 We do not consider the proposed new 6-storey building will be visually intrusive from within homes at Fire Station Yard, the closest homes.

- 6.77 The outlook from the rear of the Fire Station Yard terrace is directly south toward Deen House and not southwest toward the site. No.10 as the closest property will have sight from its west side elevation (secondary windows / non-habitable rooms) to 29/31 Maclure Road and the new building, and an oblique view southwest to the new building, though its dining room window is set back at ground level behind its kitchen outrigger.
- 6.78 This degree of inter-visibility is not unusual for an inner urban area and because the change is from a single-storey building it will be noticeable. But a change in view and visibility does not equate to being intrusive or harmful.
- 6.79 We do not consider the new building as intruding on views received from within rooms because we do not normally stand at a window blankly staring out but are usually seated inside and more often than not, we are watching TV, reading or doing something other than staring out the window. In practice the new building will largely go unseen from within existing homes, at best a background and fleeting glimpse, but not intrusive.
- 6.80 The building will be readily seen from rear gardens though again trees, walls and outriggers lend more screening further from the site to east, and it is No.10 that will have the clearest of views. This change in outlook is inevitable and the building must be considered to intrude to a degree.
- 6.81 In mitigation the context is an inner urban location where a residential building of 6-storeys is not an incongruous development, particularly located adjacent to a main railway station where buildings of scale are to be expected generally – and indeed promoted by the Council’s development policy. But we accept that a degree of harm from intrusion will arise from within the garden spaces.
- 6.82 Concern from overlooking is generally about perception. Even in suburban layouts with wider separation distances someone standing at a window looking out will see into other gardens and homes at a range of angles. But most people do not behave in this manner and so it is often the direct alignment of windows that gives rise to the perception of overlooking and harm.
- 6.83 There is an existing relationship between rear 29-31 Maclure Road and side elevation 10 Fire Station Yard, which is also residential in nature. Though internal arrangements change at nos.29-31 the relationship between is unchanged, and the west elevation of no.10 comprises secondary or non-habitable room windows. Though the relationship

between windows is direct it is unchanged and creates no new perception of overlooking or harm.

- 6.84 The new building forms an L-shape to rear with two windows on the east elevation facing down the rear ginnel and four windows on the north elevation facing across the rear of 29-31 Maclure Road and the ginnel to the west side of 10 Fire Station Yard. No direct line of sight is created toward and existing house or windows which is an important design consideration in matters of perception of overlooking.
- 6.85 We acknowledge an oblique view is available between the north facing elevation of the new building and rear 10 Fire Station Yard but without the direct alignment the perception of overlooking does not arise. And as you rise above first floor the actual outlook from the new building window is toward first the roof and then over the rooftops.
- 6.86 On balance we consider the arrangement of windows and elevations in the new build avoids giving perception of overlooking through denial of a direct line of sight.

Planning policy consideration of impacts

- 6.87 Core Strategy Policies P3 and DM1 provide the policy basis of amenity assessment, supported by design guides SPD and also the Rochdale Station Area SPD.
- 6.88 In Policy P3 the concern is to respect context in scale, density, massing, height, layout, etc. by respecting such design matters is to give voice to amenity issues that may arise. The policy also cross-references Urban Design Guides adopted in 2007, including Urban Design SPD and Residential Design SPD.
- 6.89 The Rochdale Station Area SPD supports the regeneration objectives of the Core Strategy and sets out in its adopted masterplan proposals the redevelopment of the single storey building on the site into a high density residential development with retail and commercial uses on the ground floor. The SPD refers to the building footprint to be increased and to align with the current buildings lines to increase scheme viability. The SPD also identifies the Site as a landmark location because of its relationship to the railway station.
- 6.90 Core Strategy Policy DM1 is more explicit on what needs to be considered in amenity in part (c) for new development not to adversely affect the amenity of residents through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing and loss of privacy.

- 6.91 Assessment has found a degree of harm to amenity which is not unexpected or unusual in an urban setting with buildings tightly arranged. However, that harm is limited and very specific to the two closest dwellings, nos.9 & 10 Fire Station Yard. We consider that harm to be limited impact on access to daylight to some, but not all, relevant habitable room windows; overshadowing impact to the garden of no.10; and a degree of visual intrusion from within gardens from the new building.
- 6.92 That very localised and limited harm to amenity considerations must be balanced against wider public benefits arising from the proposals which we turn to in the conclusion.

Access and transport

- 6.93 The site is located in one of the most sustainable locations in the Borough at Rochdale Railway Station – or more catchily described in the Transport Assessment, prepared by Arcadis, as the ‘Rochdale Station Area Transit Orientated Community.’ But this is fair as it is an interchange for train, tram and buses, it is within 900m of the town centre accessible on foot, cycle, tram and bus, and the Rochdale Station Area SPD is promoting, along with the Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy (2020), a new community focused on the convergence of the transport options that provide an ability to live in a predominantly car-free lifestyle.
- 6.94 For this reason the proposal does not provide any car parking for residents, but there is a one for one provision for secure cycle parking.
- 6.95 As noted in the TA, paragraph 111 of the Framework advises that *“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”*
- 6.96 Not only are no such grounds identified in the evidence, but we should be positively supporting a car-free development that aligns with the Vision and Objectives of the Core Strategy and Rochdale Station Area SPD to encourage sustainable transport choices and lifestyle. This can and should be afforded substantial weight in favour of the development.

Other matters

Ecology

- 6.97 GMEU has acted as advisor to the applicant and given that the site comprises a 100% built environment only a bat survey was necessary to be commissioned in October 2023. It concludes that no evidence of bats was found in 29-31 Maclure Road nor in the single-storey building. Matters of ecological impact are therefore non-determinant in this application.

Archaeology

- 6.98 Salford Archaeology has provided an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment. This is a follow-on report to its wider assessment of the Station Square undertaken for the RDA previously. Focused on the site it concludes that the potential for buried archaeological remains is considered low and any that might remain are likely to be of negligible significance (section 10.2). It continues that following consultation with Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) that no further archaeological investigation will be required.

Drainage and flood risk

- 6.99 Booth King has provided a Drainage Strategy Report which also considers flood risk.
- 6.100 The site is under 1 hectare and in Flood Zone 1 and therefore at the lowest risk from flood events and it is also located outside the defined Flood Priorities Area in the Rochdale Borough SFRA.
- 6.101 Because of the urban and fully built nature of the site, following application of the drainage hierarchy set out under CIRA C753 SuDS Manual there is no practical means to consider infiltration for surface water drainage. Review of sewer records also shows no practical means to connect to a surface water sewer meaning discharge will be necessary to the nearest combined sewer as the only practical option.
- 6.102 Surface water discharge will be attenuated to 5l/s to offer a 50% betterment on the existing off-site flow rates which will be achieved through holding back water discharge in sub-surface attenuation tank and controlled release.
- 6.103 Foul surface connection will be to the existing combined sewer.

Ground conditions

- 6.104 NX Consulting has prepared a Phase 1 Geo-environmental Desk Study & Ground Stability Risk Assessment on behalf of the RDA. It has found no evidence of ground instability, major contamination sources or invasive plant species from a site inspection.
- 6.105 Review of records show the property is at low risk from coal mining related instability and ground gas risk with recommendation of no further action being required.
- 6.106 Review of records on landfill sites and ground gases, and the development history of the site, poses a Low to Moderate risk from hazardous ground gas due to possible presence of made ground. A detailed site investigation (Phase 2) is recommended to be secured by standard planning condition given the future residential use to rule out any source-pathway linkage.

Noise and Vibration

- 6.107 SRL has provided a Noise & Vibration Assessment. This was commissioned in light of the proposed residential use and proximity of tram and train lines. Its findings show that vibration levels at the site are low and no mitigation measures will be required in this regard (section 8.0).
- 6.108 On noise levels are relatively low and either standard thermal double glazing or minor acoustic upgrades to glazing will be suitable to achieve required internal room standards (section 4.0). Potential for noise impact from ground floor commercial use to residential use above can be mitigated through internal fitout and a sound insulated shell and core to the commercial units (section 9.0).
- 6.109 Section 10.0 sets out recommendation for any future plant noise limits at receptors to be based on measured background readings in absence of council guidelines. A planning condition can be applied to cross-reference Table 10 to secure the relevant noise limit on future plant at day and night.

Air Quality

- 6.110 SRL has provide an Air Quality Assessment.
- 6.111 TEXT TO COMPLETE



29-31 Maclure Road – Building condition

- 6.112 Booth King has prepared an Existing Building Condition Report for the two retained buildings. The findings show the buildings to be in a generally reasonable condition, with no signs of significant structural defects. Recommendations are made for further intrusive investigations as part of development works and remedy to any identified defects. Removal of the rear outriggers is and other required internal alterations are identified as structurally feasible. Development of the new 6-storey building will be required not to transfer loads on to the existing building, carrying its load on its own concrete frame.
- 6.113 No structural reasons are identified that might prevent the undertaking of the proposed development.

Open Space Assessment

- 6.114 New housing development is required to potentially provide open space and recreation onsite where appropriate and feasible, or offsite through developer contribution where it is not. Policy allows for exceptions to provision.
- 6.115 The boxed text (overpage) sets out our Assessment.

Open Space Assessment

CS Policies G6 and DM2 require provision of open space in new housing developments. Rochdale Station Area SPD cross-references policy and provides guidance on areas of deficiency it seeks to address. There is no specific guidance relating to this site, but it is noted that the approved redevelopment at the Former Central Retail Park includes provision of a new linear park which is one of the key ambitions for open space provision in the vicinity of the site, and of course the improvement and pedestrianised Station Square immediately adjacent to the site.

Table 6.2 provides a breakdown of the open space need from the proposal against policy requirements set under Provision of Open Space in New Housing SPD (2017). It is immediately apparent that the site is physically incapable of meeting any onsite open space provision.

What is also apparent from the financial viability information provided by Rochdale Development Agency (RDA) is that the funding gap in the proposal means that no financial contribution will be possible either.

Table 6.2 Open Space Calculations

Open Space	Standard	Calculated need	Provision
Local Open Space	10m ² per bedroom	53 bedrooms = 530m ²	Nil Cannot provide on-site. Not financially viable to make contribution due to funding gap (see evidence RDA)
Recreational open space	>10 dwellings but less than 100 bedrooms	Financial contribution to offsite recreational open space provision; Apartment developments to usable amenity space on site – typically 1/3 of application site	Nil Not financially viable to make contribution due to funding gap (see evidence RDA) Site cannot provide onsite amenity space.
Outdoor Sports	>900 bedrooms for offsite commuted sum	<900 bedrooms, no requirement	n/a
Maintenance contribution	n/a	n/a	n/a

Therefore there is a shortfall in provision of open space against policies G6, DM1 and DM2, and associated Open Space SPD. However, the site is close to existing open space provision and the proposed new linear park at the Former Central Retail Park which forms part of wider regeneration plans for the neighbourhood through the Rochdale Station Area SPD.

Town Centre Uses Sequential Site Test

- 6.116 Because the proposal includes commercial floorspace outside the defined town centre a sequential site test is required under Framework paragraph 87. No impact test is required as the proposal is less than 2,500 sqm floorspace (paragraph 90). We provide a short retail assessment in the boxed text over page.

Retail Assessment

As the existing development contains commercial floorspace in E(a) retail and E(b) food and drink uses the assessment will relate the net change created by the proposal and mix of uses proposed for the new commercial space. Table 6.3 provides a summary on the change in commercial floorspace.

Table 6.3 Commercial Floorspace Change

	Existing	Use(s)	Proposed	Use(s)	Difference
29-31 Maclure Road	258 sqm	Class E(b)	342.9 sqm	Classes E(a), E(b), E(c) or E(e)	- 373.1 sqm
33-41 Maclure Road	458 sqm	Class E(a)			

The proposal therefore sees a reduction in floorspace overall due to great floorspace given over to residential entrance, cycle parking and support services. But as the proposal seeks flexibility in Class E uses it is not possible to describe a specific gain or loss in Class E(a) or E(b), though it is plain the total amount of Class E(a) retail space will always be less than current.

As part of the regeneration strategy supported in the Rochdale Station Area SPD (2021) and related policies, there is a specific requirement to provide commercial floorspace at ground floor at the station square and to this site. And, as a retained, though internally altered commercial space, the ground floor use of 29-31 Maclure Road is not a material change of use in respect of around a third of the total proposed floorspace. Specifically the SPD seeks to *maintain and enhance activity at ground floor level* which will in turn provide natural surveillance from ‘eyes on the street,’ as well creating *an open and diverse area and a gateway to the town* [with] *mixed commercial development to facilitate future needs*.

Without doubt there are commercial unit vacancies in the town centre at Drake Street (nearest area) and at its periphery on Oldham Road (edge of centre). But because of the regeneration policy direction and brief for development of the site we have not sought to undertake any study of vacancy rates or available alternative in-centre units. Failure to provide the replacement commercial floorspace would fail to animate the street frontage and station square as an arrival point into the town sought under policy. Moreover, the scheme actually sees a reduction in out-of-centre retail floorspace from current potential 716 sqm to no greater than 342.9 sqm.

No impact assessment is required for such a small scale of floorspace. Accordingly, we see no harm arising from the small scale commercial units to matters of retail planning importance.



Heads of Terms

- 6.117 No developer contributions are proposed.
- 6.118 As a public body, Rochdale Development Agency is bringing forward the site and proposals as part of its remit to support the regeneration of the Rochdale Station Area in line with the Council's vision and objectives. To do so requires public subsidy to bridge the viability gap as set out in the submitted evidence of the RDA. It is intended that the funding gap will be secured through application to the Brownfield Fund.
- 6.119 Where relevant to policy additional statements have been prepared on matters of affordable housing and open space provision in this Planning Statement. Each record the policy position and relate back to allowable exceptions on matter of supporting other planning objectives, i.e. regeneration, and viability.

7 PLANNING BALANCE

Sustainable development

- 7.1 Framework paragraph 8 sets out that achieving sustainable development has three overarching, interdependent objectives of economic, social and environmental concerns. The development overwhelmingly supports all three objectives, mutually reinforcing the benefits to create a greater whole.
- 7.2 The proposal will see the building of new homes on under-utilised brownfield land in the heart of the town, located adjacent to the main railway station and key transport hub. It will support in the creation of strong, vibrant community focused around the Rochdale Station Area envisaged in the SPD and supporting delivery of Rochdale Growth Plan 2020-30 and Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy 2020 objectives.
- 7.3 The development, in conjunction with planned public realm improvements to the station square that it will open out onto, will transform the immediate environs of the station gateway, forming a landmark building to frame the public space. It will remove the harm created by the unsympathetic single-storey corner building, complement and frame retained 29-31 Maclure Road, and will use a palette of complementary materials and finishes.
- 7.4 Building design incorporates attainment of LETI Net Zero Carbon in Operation and SAP10 Net Zero Carbon in Design (NZCiD) through implementation of high-performance building materials, low air permeability, and a number of energy-efficient and renewable technologies.
- 7.5 38 new 1-bed and 2-bed apartments will be created meeting relevant Nationally Described Space Standards. The modern homes will represent a change in quality in the area and are designed to provide a benchmark for future regeneration schemes over the next 10 years. The homes will be targeted at the private rental sector to raise values and change perceptions in the local housing market and seek to capture the potential for rail commuting between Rochdale and Manchester, targeting a younger, professional demographic. This forms part of the wider Growth Plan and Rail Corridor strategies and will provide confidence to the market to invest in the wider plans for the area.
- 7.6 Because of the imperative to support regeneration objectives, to elevate and change the perception of the neighbourhood and boost market housing and long-term values, there

is no provision for affordable housing in line with policy exception, and the proposal works with wider housing policy objectives.

- 7.7 The application site is a highly sustainable location with direct access to trains, trams and buses to locations across the town and Greater Manchester, and within walking and cycling distances of the town centre, its shops, services and facilities. For this reason no car parking provision is made to support sustainable transport choices, and cycle parking will be provided for all new homes.
- 7.8 There are no known contamination risks at the site subject to further detailed investigation. The site has no flood risk, can connect to existing drainage infrastructure, and will not be harmed by matters of air quality, noise or vibration as evidenced through assessment.
- 7.9 Located partly within and party at the edge of the Maclure Road Conservation Area, assessment of the heritage impacts has identified potential for only a very slight impact on the landmark qualities of the Grade II* listed RC Church (and associative impacts on the conservation area) in the meaning of Framework paragraph 202. And in connection with the Fire Station there is potential for a slight/minor negative impact on in relation to its landmark qualities, particularly its tower in the meaning of Framework 203.
- 7.10 Residential amenity has been carefully considered and it has been demonstrated that there a degree of harm arises to Nos.9 & 10 Fire Station Yard at the rear of the site. However, that harm is limited and very specific to those two properties, relating to reduced daylight received to some, but not all windows, and overshadowing of the garden of No.10. No harm to overlooking or loss of privacy has been identified taking into account this is an inner urban location and the specific arrangement of the new building to avoid direct views between homes
- 7.11 All told the development proposals accord with the relevant strategic objectives and policies of the Rochdale Core Strategy and associated SPD, including the Rochdale Station Area SPD 2021 which is of greatest relevance. The proposal also supports key national planning policy objectives toward reuse of brownfield sites, efficient and effective use of land, provision of housing, supporting carbon net neutral and directing higher density development to the most sustainable locations. All such matters are of significant importance and should be given substantial weight in the planning balance.



- 7.12 The two minor areas of harm to heritage and amenity identified are not significant and should not be afforded significant weight in the planning balance, and even it was to be, would still be demonstrably outweighed by the public benefits accruing from the regeneration and wider delivery across a range of matters of planning importance. Overall there is an overwhelming positive planning balance to the proposals.
- 7.13 In line with Framework paragraph 11(c) we conclude that this is a sustainable development that reaches a positive balance in support of relevant development plan policies and therefore should be approved without delay.