

# **SEQUENTIAL ASSESSMENT**

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE TO  
RETAIL UNIT AT GROUND FLOOR WITH FIRST  
FLOOR RESIDENTIAL SPACE**

**296 YORKSHIRE STREET  
ROCHDALE**

## **1. Sequential Assessment**

As required by RMBC Core Strategy Policy and in line with NPPF Guidance, this assessment has been provided to provide a sequential approach the assessment of the proposal which sits outside of the any defined local centre.

In line with RMBC guidance E4; the following sequential approach will be applied:

- Brownfield Sites within the Urban Area;
- Greenfield Sites within the Urban Area;
- Protected Open land; and then;
- Green Belt

To undertake the first stage of the sequential assessment, the geographical area of the assessment was first established. This included the designated city centre boundary defined by UDP maps, Policies G/S/1 and S/5 and RMBC Local Plan.

### **1.1. Site Selection**

In accordance with the requirements of NPPF, sites within the defined centre were assessed first, followed by the consideration of edge of centre sites and then out-of-centre sites.

### **1.2. Town centre sites**

The NPPF defines a Town Centre as: “An area defined on the local authority’s policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising, or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.” In this case, Rochdale Town centre was surveyed. The extent of the centre was determined by UDP maps.

### **1.3. Edge of centre sites**

Sites on the edge of a town centre are determined by the NPPF to be “For retail purposes, a location that is well connected to, and up to 300 metres from, the primary shopping area”. There is no edge of centre sites identified for the purposes of this assessment.

### **1.4. Out of centre sites**

Finally, an out of centre location is defined as “A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.” The application site can be classified as an ‘out-of-centre’ location which is around 640 meters away from Rochdale Town centre or a 22 minute walk.

### **1.5. Justification of site selection process**

Whilst in theory any site of any size in or on the edge of centre can be included in the assessment this would be unrealistic and not practical to the assessment.

Case law set by Aldergate Properties Ltd and Mansfield District Council concluded that the particular commercial attributes of a retailer should not dictate which sites are considered “suitable” and “available” in relation to the sequential test, but that the reference should be had to the type of development proposed which includes “size, type and ranges of goods” and to what sites are available for that type of retail use. This suggests that the developer must apply a degree of flexibility when considering which premises could accommodate the proposed development.

In this instance, the operator requires a site providing a minimum of 140m<sup>2</sup> internal floor space over at least two floors. For operational purposes it is essential that the site had an existing building and capable of comfortable conversion, an outside area that would accommodate a small parking area and refuse storage. Ideally be located off a good accessible road and be within a catchment area for footfall traffic to a ground floor retail unit.

Those sites that have been identified as being a suitable size to accommodate the floor area required have been further assessed in accordance with the sequential test approach.

In accordance with the NPPF the criteria used in assessing the suitability of those sites identified can be summarised as follows:

- Adopted Development Plan compliance.
- Sequentially preferable to application site.
- Suitable in terms of access/linked trips/ability to accommodate the development/proximity to similar facilities.
- Viability; and
- Availability.

### **1.6. Site Survey**

As set out above there are no ‘edge of centre’ destinations identified within the sequential test site survey work. The focus of the site survey has been based upon the primary and secondary designated retail frontages defined within the UDP and market survey work.

The methodology adopted for completing the sequential test involved the identification of sites, followed by a desktop exercise to determine the suitability of each against the identified criteria.

More in depth research was also undertaken on specific sites to establish any relevant planning constraints, opportunities, or history. Similarly, compliance with local policy was assessed.

## **2. Identified Available Sites**

Desktop research was undertaken to determine whether there are any available sites within the town centre; secondly any sites available located ‘edge of centre’ and lastly any sites available out of centre. Desktop and market research found the following sites.

## **Town Centre Sites**

**No Town Centre Site currently available for purchase could be identified.**

## **Edge of Centre Sites (within 300m of Town Centre)**

- **East Street, Rochdale. OL16 2EG**

## **Out of Centre Sites (Not Further than 640m from centre)**

- **St. Albans Street, Rochdale OL16**
- **Brunswick Street, Rochdale OL16**

As previously mentioned, this assessment will only consider sites available for purchase within the Town Centre or sites categorised as edge of centre given the proposed site location and proximity to the Town Centre. Research identified no available sites within the town centre available for purchase and found only a single site that could be categorised as 'edge of centre'.

The above sites have been sequentially assessed with regards to the following to assess whether the identified site is preferred to the proposal site.

- **Viability** – Located within a catchment area for footfall traffic to a ground floor retail unit;
- **Suitability** – Meets required sizing and operational requirements such as access and parking;
- **Sustainability** – Be located or close to an established local centre or linear commercial area;
- **Availability** – The site must be available for purchase and be sequentially better than the proposal site in all of the above.

### **2.1. East Street, Rochdale. OL16 2EG**

- **Brownfield Site;**
- **Mid Terrace Property**
- **300m From Town Centre.**

## **Viability**

The identified site is located along East Street, 300m from the Town Centre allowing the site to be categorised as an edge of centre site. The site is located off Yorkshire Street, a linear commercial area known locally for its high levels of footfall, high traffic density and public transport links to the Town Centre. While the sites proximity to Yorkshire Street is of benefit, the property itself is located outside of the linear commercial area and forms a mid-terrace property in a row of residential use buildings. Viability of a retail unit would be good given the proximity to the local commercial centre however the position of the dwelling currently and its orientation with the surround dwellings does not make the property any more viable than that of 296 Yorkshire Street.

## **Suitability**

The identified site would offer a two storey property with garden space to the rear accessed solely from East Street. The property offers internal floor space of 140m<sup>2</sup> over two floors and would

therefore meet the required operational requirements. The site is also located closer to the Town Centre than that of the proposal site.

Access to the site is provided solely from East Street with no scope to provide accessible bin storage or off street parking, both of which are considerations met by the proposed site of 296 Yorkshire Street. While the site is located closer to the Town Centre than the proposal site, the key requirements for access and parking are not provided, this coupled with the negligible proximity difference to the proposal site of 140m and the high disturbance a retail unit would cause to residents along East Street make the site less than suitable when compared to 296 Yorkshire Street.

The identified site does not meet the operational requirements proposed nor does it meet the requirements set out in Planning Policy both locally and nationally for the proposed uses.

### **Sustainability**

In order for a site to be sustainable it should firstly meet the above requirements for viability and suitability, secondly where a proposed site is located 'edge of centre' the proposed site should be linked or very closely linked to a local commercial area as identified by RMBC UDP maps and local plan.

The identified site does form a brownfield site categorised as 'edge of centre' however; when considering its location and the above suitability and viability requirements, the identified site of East Street does not offer a more sustainable proposal than that of 296 Yorkshire Street.

### **Availability**

East Street as identified is available for purchase and is therefore available for consideration within this report, however given the above assessment of the site it is clear that the site identified is not a preferred site when compared to the proposal site of 296 Yorkshire Street.

## **2.2 St. Albans Street**

- **Brownfield Site;**
- **Mid Terrace**
- **570m From Town Centre.**

### **Viability**

The identified site is located along St Albans Street, Rochdale, 570m from the Town Centre allowing the site to be categorised as an out of centre site. The site is located to the rear of Drake Street an area identifiable for its growing retail and commercial presence. While the sites proximity to Drake Street is of benefit, the property itself is located outside of the linear commercial area and forms a mid-terrace property in a row of residential use buildings. Viability of a retail unit would be good given the proximity to the local commercial centre however the position of the dwelling currently and its orientation with the surround dwellings does not make the property any more viable than that of 296 Yorkshire Street.

### **Suitability**

The identified site would offer a two storey property with small garden space to the rear accessed from both St. Albans Street and Broadfield Street. Market details do not provide internal floor space

areas for this site however the site is marketed as a 5 bedroom property so it is assumed the property would be adequate from a required floor area stand point.

Access to the site is provided from both St. Albans Street and Broadfield Street with little scope to provide accessible bin storage for both a retail and residential property. The site also offers no availability for off street parking, both of which are considerations met by the proposed site of 296 Yorkshire Street. The site is located further away from the local town centre than that of 296 Yorkshire Street and therefore would not be a sequentially preferred site than that of 296 Yorkshire Street when considering Local and National Planning Policy.

The identified site does not meet the operational requirements proposed nor does it meet the requirements set out in Planning Policy both locally and nationally for the proposed uses.

### **Sustainability**

In order for a site to be sustainable it should firstly meet the above requirements for viability and suitability, secondly where a proposed site is located 'edge of centre' the proposed site should be linked or very closely linked to a local commercial area as identified by RMBC UDP maps and local plan.

The identified site does form a brownfield site however it is categorised as 'out of centre', a trait shared by both this site and the proposal site however the proposal site is located closer to the local town centre and meets the above viability and suitability requirements. Sustainability of the identified site of St. Albans Street is considered to be less than satisfactory as it represents a less than preferred site than 296 Yorkshire Street when considering the above viability and suitability requirements as well as location when compared to the local town centre and close linear commercial areas.

### **Availability**

St Albans Street as identified is available for purchase and is therefore available for consideration within this report, however given the above assessment of the site it is clear that the site identified is not a preferred site when compared to the proposal site of 296 Yorkshire Street.

## **2.3 Brunswick Street, Rochdale OL16**

- **Brownfield Site;**
- **End Terrace**
- **630m From Town Centre.**

### **Viability**

The identified site is located along Brunswick Street, Rochdale, 630m from the Town Centre allowing the site to be categorised as an out of centre site. The site is located within a heavily residential area of Rochdale off Entwistle Road. The area of the site is located far from any commercial area and consists of a solely residential area. Viability of a retail unit within this area would not only be less than preferred when compared to 296 Yorkshire Street but would be an absolute detriment to the area surrounding the site.

### **Suitability**

The identified site would offer a three storey property with small garden space to the rear accessed from both Brunswick Street. Market details do not provide internal floor space areas for this site however the site is marketed as a 7 bedroom property so it is assumed the property would be adequate from a required floor area stand point.

Once again scope for off street parking is nil when considering the identified site, a new retail unit within this area would unduly disturb the residential nature of the area and be a detriment to the surrounding dwellings when considering Local and National Planning Policy.

The identified site does not meet the operational requirements proposed nor does it meet the requirements set out in Planning Policy both locally and nationally for the proposed uses.

### **Sustainability**

In order for a site to be sustainable it should firstly meet the above requirements for viability and suitability, secondly where a proposed site is located 'edge of centre' the proposed site should be linked or very closely linked to a local commercial area as identified by RMBC UDP maps and local plan.

The site does not form a sustainable retail development given the area in which the site is located, the lack of off street parking opportunities, poor access points and less than desirable proximity to any heavy footfall catchment area. The site is vastly less sustainable as a retail proposal than that of 296 Yorkshire Street and forms a less than preferred site for any retail proposal when compared to 296 Yorkshire Street.

### **Availability**

Brunswick Street as identified is available for purchase and is therefore available for consideration within this report, however given the above assessment of the site it is clear that the site identified is not a preferred site when compared to the proposal site of 296 Yorkshire Street.

## **3. Assessment of the Proposal Site.**

### **PROPOSAL SITE**

296 Yorkshire Street

- **Brownfield Site;**
- **Mid Terrace**
- **640m From Town Centre.**

### **Viability**

The proposal site of 296 Yorkshire Street is located 640m from the Town Centre allowing the site to be categorised as an out of centre site. The site forms a small area between both linear commercial areas of Yorkshire Street and faces directly over Yorkshire Street. Given its location and proximity to both of Yorkshire Street's linear commercial areas, the site is considered to be highly viable as a retail unit; this is further evidenced by the directly neighbouring Maria Fashion shop (298 Yorkshire Street) which acts as somewhat of a visual end point where the commercial uses of Yorkshire Street end to form a residential area before commencing with heavy retail uses towards Rochdale Fire Station.

The area surrounding the site is very well connected with public transport links and off road parking bays creating a perfect environment for retail premises. Viability of the site as a retail unit is not only assessed to be suitable but evidenced by the retail units surrounding the site that also sit outside of the identified linear commercial area.

### **Suitability**

The proposal site offers 145m<sup>2</sup> internal floor space with large private garden space to the rear and an additional long driveway area. It has become increasingly difficult to locate suitable brown field sites capable of retail conversion that also provide provision for off street parking, many established retail units along Yorkshire Street (both inside and outside the linear commercial areas) provide no parking availability.

The site would seamlessly integrate as a retail unit and further expand the rich retail opportunities afforded by Yorkshire Street. Market analysis also indicates that existing residential units along Yorkshire Street similar to 296 Yorkshire Street are purchased with the view of conversion to retail space, this is again likely evidence of the opportunities for retail along Yorkshire Street.

The proposal site meets operational requirements proposed for the ground floor retail unit as well as the requirements of off street parking set out in Planning Policy both locally and nationally for the proposed uses. Bin storage is also a key point covered by the inclusion of a separate garden space to the rear of Yorkshire Street.

### **Sustainability**

In order for a site to be sustainable it should firstly meet the above requirements for viability and suitability, secondly where a proposed site is located 'edge of centre' the proposed site should be linked or very closely linked to a local commercial area as identified by RMBC UDP maps and local plan.

Footfall to the area is incredibly high given the number of retail, commercial and hot food takeaways units in the area. The amount of footfall increases the sustainability of the proposal site and further evidences the sites suitability for retail use.

As identified above, the site meets all required operational requirements to create a suitable and viable retail unit to the ground floor. Sustainability of the site is also considered to be acceptable given the sites close proximity to the linear commercial area of Yorkshire Street. The proposal site and its proposed retail use at ground floor is seen to be in line with requirements of E1 within Rochdale's Core Strategy document, specifically given the lack of impact the proposal would have to the area of Yorkshire Street as a thriving commercial area, the abundance of connections to the Town Centre and given the lack of suitable sites within the Town Centre or 'edge of town centre'.

### **Availability**

With regards to availability, the site is currently owned by the applicant making the development of a retail unit incredibly feasible from an economic stand point.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The purpose of this assessment was to assess, in line with paragraph 7 of the NPPF and the Rochdale Council's validation requirements, whether there are any sequentially preferable sites to the application site to accommodate the proposed development.

As set out within the assessment, the suitability, viability, and availability of any sequentially preferable sites within or close to Rochdale town centre were assessed. The assessment confirmed that there were no sites available within the town centre for purchase at this time, equally sites that are available on (either edge of centre or out of centre) are not sequentially preferable to the proposal site, as no sites could accommodate the required criteria for internal and external use for the use under NPPF standards. While the proposal site equally requires development, cost and viability for any such development is considered acceptable given the property is already owned by the applicant and therefore any costs are greatly reduced as a result. The existing property also offers additional floor space to the roof area allowing NPPF space standards to be achieved with less development required on the site. In addition any development would not affect the availability of off street parking to the rear, which is highly desired not only by the applicant by local planning guidance.

As discussed no sites could be identified within the town centre or edge of town centre available for purchase, equally Yorkshire Street currently does not offer any available sites within either of the linear commercial areas. While the proposal site sits outside of the town centre edge and forms an out of centre retail proposal, various out of centre properties within heavy residential areas behind Yorkshire Street also provide retail uses to at least their ground floor, these being:

- Shoaib Groceries – 37 Oswald Street;
- Maria Fashion – 298 Yorkshire Street (Neighbouring the proposal site);
- G.K. Furniture – Entwistle Road;

Each of the above sites currently operate as retail units outside of the linear commercial area, some of which are located further away from the town centre than the proposal site and all of which do not provide any off street parking provisions for employees or customers making the above sites a less than suitable for retail when considering Nation and Local Planning Policy.

As the proposal site forms a section of Yorkshire Street close to the identified linear commercial area the proposal site and its proposed retail use at ground floor is seen to be in line with requirements of E1 within Rochdale's Core Strategy document, specifically given the lack of impact the proposal would have to the area of Yorkshire Street as a thriving commercial area, the abundance of connections to the Town Centre and given the lack of suitable sites within the Town Centre or 'edge of town centre'.

Paragraph 87 of the NPPF emphasises that when proposals for out of centre and edge of centre sites are being considered, that preference towards sites that connect well to the city or town centre should be given. The proposal site connects directly to the town centre and is situated between two separate linear commercial areas.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development conforms to both local planning policy and to the provisions of the NPPF.