



Landscape and Visual Appraisal & Landscape Policy Statement

342 Heywood Old Road, Middleton

For: Alken Properties Ltd

Ref: M2920_LVA_0322_jt/mw



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The key objectives of this landscape and visual appraisal are to provide an overview of potential landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed development.
- 1.2 The appraisal has been carried out as part of an iterative design process and has helped to guide the siting and form of the proposed dwellings and the landscape proposals associated with the scheme.
- 1.3 An initial LVA was carried out in December 2017. This document has been updated. We are informed that there has been no meaningful change in circumstances on site. Photographs used are the original photographs taken.

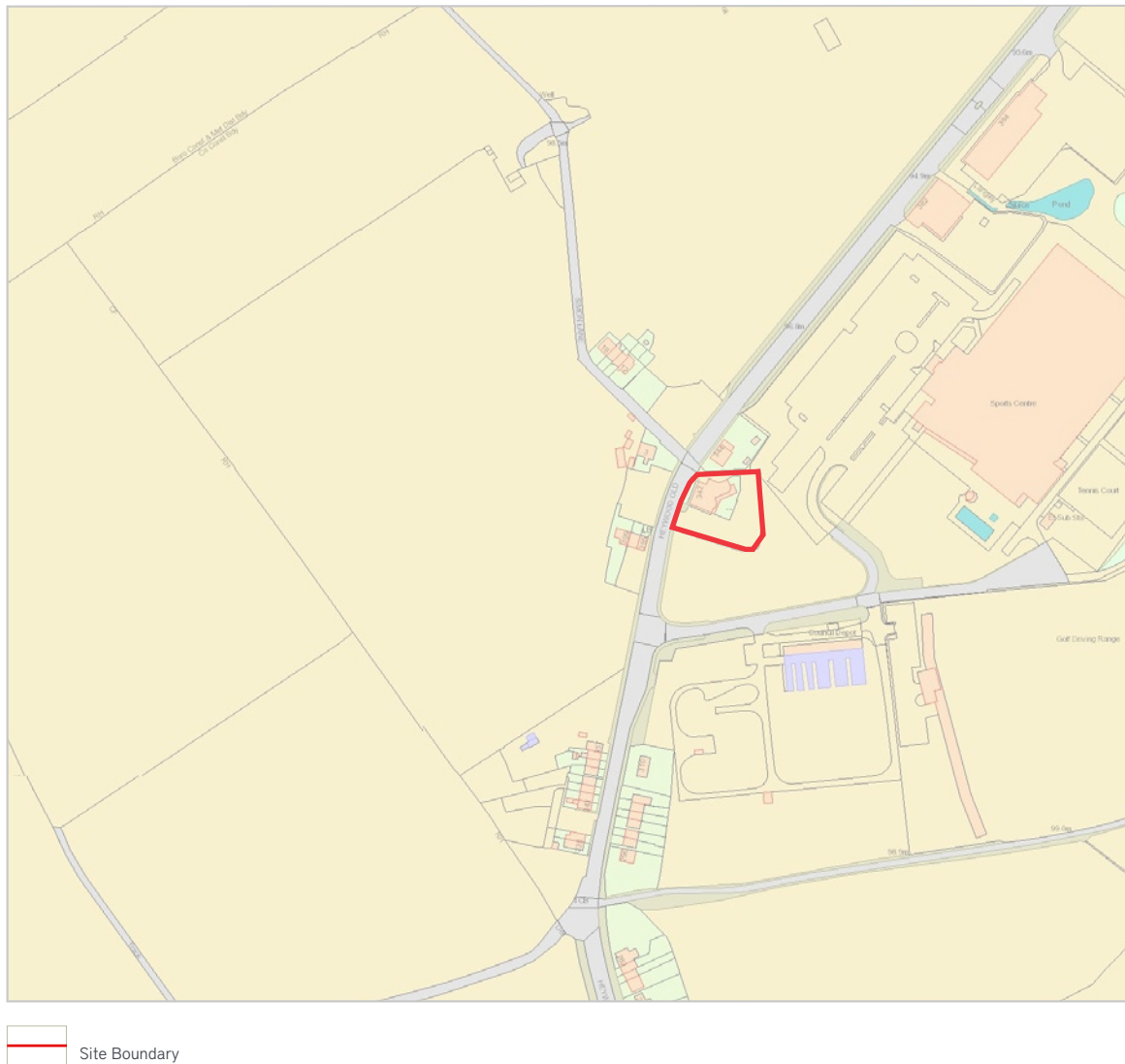


Fig 1 Site Location

1.0

Introduction



Site Boundary

Fig 2 Aerial Photograph

- 1.4 This appraisal was undertaken with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition 2013), by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, and comprises a level of assessment considered appropriate to the scale, nature and landscape context of the development proposals.
- 1.5 More specifically, the appraisal will address the key policy considerations set out in the Rochdale Local Plan, namely policy G5 of the Core Strategy and also saved policy D/10 of the Unitary Development Plan.

2.0 The Application Site & Environs

2.1 Key features and characteristics:

- Positioned circa 2.5km west-north-west of the centre of Middleton, and 1.3km south of the Birch Services off the M62 between Manchester and Leeds, the site lies on the eastern side of the A6045, Heywood Old Road;
- A 0.16ha previously developed site within an area of Protected Open Land as identified on the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. That Protected Open Land is a belt of land around the south-western and western part of Middleton between the settlement boundary and the A6045, (Heywood Old Road), and contains playing fields, commercial and light industrial properties, car parking area and residential properties, as well as 2no. farms and pasture;
- The green belt between Rochdale and Bury begins on the western side of the A6045, opposite the application site, where the landscape becomes notably more rural and the land gently undulates towards the M62 transport corridor;
- Formerly the Tapios restaurant, the site has a 2 storey building located at the front of the site addressing Heywood Old Road from a short setback of circa 2m, and with various single storey extensions located to the side and rear;



SP1 - The existing vacant building and access from Heywood Old Road.

2.0

The Application Site



SP2 - Fire damage is evident to the rear of the property.



SP3 - The majority of the site is bitmac parking areas. The trees and shrubs are largely off-site.

- Recent fire damage is evident to the rear of the building (see SP3);
- The remainder of the site is effectively hardstanding for car parking and/or a raised terrace area at the rear, previously enclosed with fencing for al-fresco eating;
- The site is effectively flat;
- A belt of trees, located off-site, envelops the southern and eastern boundaries, which are set within the open 'park' land on the approach to the David Lloyd leisure complex, which lies beyond the site immediately to the east and north-east;
- A residential property (344 Heywood Old Road) lies immediately adjacent, due north of the application site, with an associated parking area sandwiched between that property and the application site building;
- Opposite the site, Simon Lane has residential properties on both sides, set a short distance off Heywood Old Road;
- The existence of the mature belt of trees and shrubs and no. 344 Heywood Old Road around 3 sides of the site, effectively contain the site and limit any meaningful views of the application site or building from any viewpoint other than from west of the site in the vicinity of the site frontage.

The Site is covered with built form or hardstanding.

The boundary planting is effectively off-site.

2.0

The Application Site

2.2 Boundaries:

- The western (front) boundary is open to the road, with a couple of steps leading up to the existing building. The building is currently set circa 2m back from the back of pavement, with a veranda over-sailing part of the frontage;
- The northern boundary is now a common boundary with 344 Heywood Old Road, although historically a farm access track ran between the 2 properties (see below). That boundary largely comprises built form, part vertical timber and part palisade fencing. Some small tree/large shrub planting is apparent beyond the boundary, either within the garden area of 344 Heywood Old Road or around the perimeter of a parking area, associated with the David Lloyd leisure complex, which also shares the rear part of the northern site boundary;
- The eastern boundary is shared with a small, open, park-like area, which appears to be associated with the setting of the David Lloyd leisure complex, and has been planted with a straggly hawthorn hedge, shrubs and a mix of self-seeded and planted trees, including Ash, birch and maple amongst others. Collectively, they form a dense screen to the leisure complex and small park area, although fly-tipping is evident within that area of scrub/planting beyond the site boundary;
- The southern boundary is also shared with the small park area which wraps around from Heywood Old Road and into the David Lloyd site. Due to a slight topographical level difference between the site and the park area, a part gabion, part brick (with buttress) retaining wall forms the boundary. A line of park trees exist on the lower park side, and within the application site, the existing tarmac parking area extends right up to the wall.



SP4 - Northern Boundary fences between the site and 344 Heywood Old Road.



SP5 - Part gabion, part brick retaining wall along the southern boundary. Bitmac right up to the wall.

3.0 Historic Progression

3.1 Historically, the application site represented the principal built form within a bigger cluster of dwellings that were centred around the Jolly Butcher Inn (the site) and around the junction of Heywood [Old] Road and Simon Lane:

- By the middle of the 19th century and on into the 20th century, the application site contained an Inn, known as The Jolly Butcher Inn, which was set at the heart of a cluster of ribbon type terraced properties around the junction of Heywood [Old] Road and Simon Lane;
- At that time, Simon Lane lead to Simon Lane Farm and other farm complexes further to the north-west;
- At the same time, and until the middle of the 20th century, a track existed immediately to the north of the application site (the Jolly Butcher Inn), between the Inn and number 344 Heywood [Old] Road. That track served Bowlee Farm and Parkside Farm (see 1909 map - Fig.3). That track is now the entrance and parking area to number 344 Oldfield Road, curtailed when Bowlee Farm ceased to exist;
- It appears that the Jolly Butcher Inn would have served the immediate properties as well as those travelling along Heywood [Old] Road. The arrival of the Bowlee Chemical Mill in the early-middle part of the 20th century, presumably brought additional employment opportunities and the ribbon development along Heywood [Old] Road increased;
- Ribbon development would historically appear on both sides of Heywood [Old] Road, although it was noticeably located more regularly on the eastern side of the road, towards the settlement of Middleton;
- During the inter-war years, more semi-detached properties appeared along the western side of the road, particularly south of the application site;
- As the 20th century went on, mills and other industry appeared to the eastern side of the road, and Middleton extended westwards towards the site. The extent of the urban settlement now runs to within 450m of the application site, and the site itself is now enveloped by urban development forms, with a newly created small 'park' area immediately to the south;
- Historically, farmland surrounded the application site to the east and separated it from the settlement at Middleton. This has largely changed with the encroachment of Middleton and the 'infilling' of the former fields due east of the site with the large David Lloyd leisure complex and associated car parking, the golf driving range and other large areas of hardstanding, notably the area used for car boot sales, east of David Lloyd;
- As such, over the years, the character of the application site itself and its immediate setting has been fundamentally affected by the development to the east;
- To the west, a number of the former terraced properties that existed as part of the cluster around the junction with Simon Lane, have disappeared, possibly as the road was widened to facilitate the increasing traffic levels;
- The Jolly Butcher Inn itself was a complex of connected buildings, which up until the middle of the 20th century filled the full width of the plot. A pond existed to the rear of the plot, which has since been filled in and is part of the car parking area.

3.0 Historic Progression

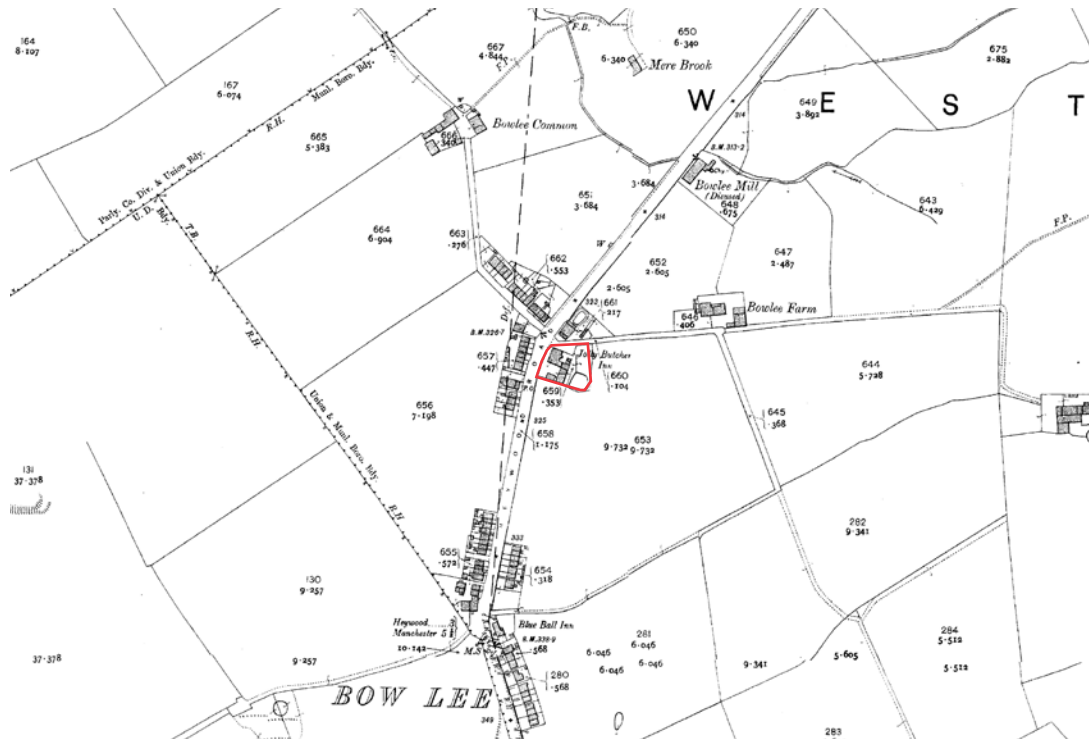


Fig 3

1909 - Ribbon Development and built form around the junction of Simon Lane and Heywood [Old] Road. A track exists to north of the site. The site is the principle built form in the cluster.

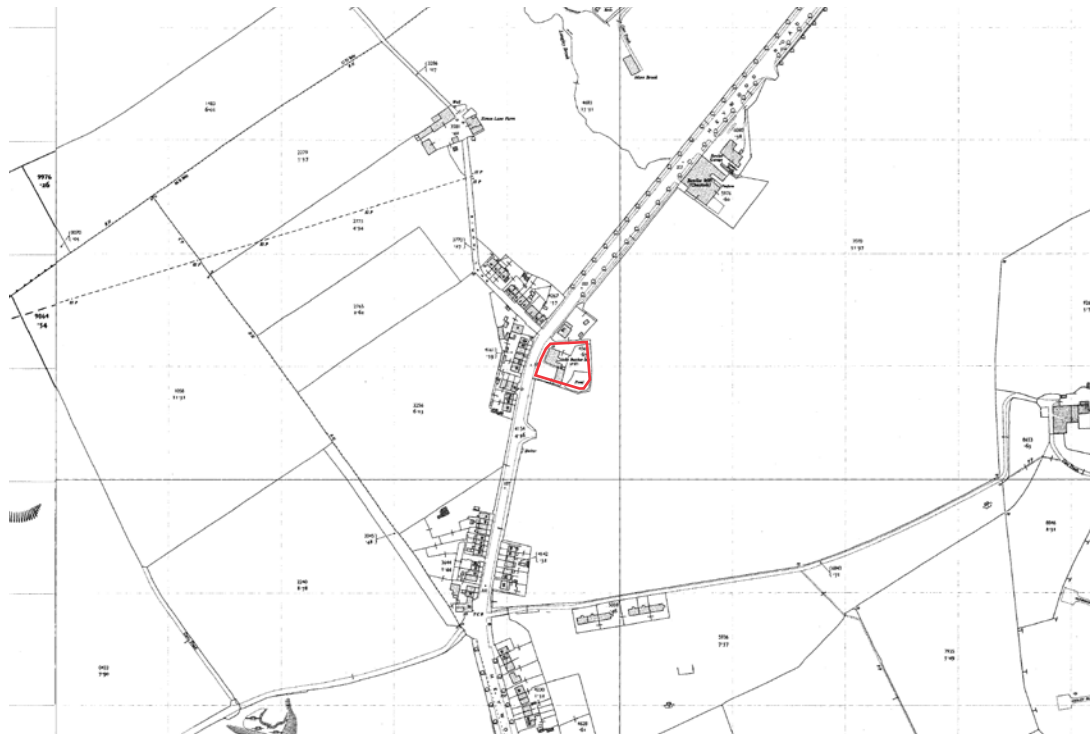


Fig 4

1955-56 - Part of Heywood [Old] Road has been tree-lined and formalised. The track between the site and no. 344 has gone. The main road is yet to be widened.

4.0 The Surrounding Landscape and Townscape

Landscape

4.1 The surrounding Landscape comprises the following key features and characteristics:

- The site is set within an area of Protected Open Land, although it is not specifically designated for its particular landscape value;
- Sitting circa 480m west of the western extent of Middleton, circa 2.6km south of the outskirts of Heywood and 2.2km east of the outskirts of Whitefield, the site is effectively within the open area separating those 3no. urban areas. Ribbon developments at Simister and Bowlee also have an urbanising influence, sited in close vicinity to the site;
- Historic ribbon development has existed along Heywood Old Road, particularly to the south of the application site, although up until the middle of the 20th century, it was largely surrounded by agrarian and pastoral fields;
- The encroaching development to the east has had a profound effect on the landscape character of the immediate area. Indeed, to the east of Heywood Old Road, there is a discernible urban effect from urban form and uses of the land;
- Beyond the houses on the western side of Heywood Old Road, the character appears as more rural in character with hedge-lined lanes, a number of field trees, and a network of public footpaths traversing the fields. The land is used for a mix of agriculture and equine uses, although there is an appreciation that one is at the edge of an urban area, with apparent large industrial sheds and the busy transport corridors and other infrastructure discernible, both visually and audibly;
- The A6045 Heywood Old Road itself is a busy road and has a visual and audible presence in the area, as does the busy M62 motorway, located circa 680m to the west;
- Native hedgerows and hedgerow/field trees are apparent beyond Heywood Old Road to the north and west, but along Heywood Old Road, vegetation appears generally more urban, mixing native and ornamental species, and is structured to boundaries or routinely spaced along the road. Recent wildflower seeding has taken place on the linear section of Heywood Old Road, some 100m north of the site;

The land to the west of Heywood Old Road appears as very much rural in character, whereas the land to the east (including the application site) is heavily influenced by urban development and settlement.

4.0 The Surrounding Landscape and Townscape

Townscape

4.2 The built form on and around Heywood Old Road is very varied in terms of nature, use, scale, age, design and materiality.

- The plan at Fig. 5 explains the land use and the number of stories/scale of individual buildings of note in the vicinity of the site. This is further explained by the photographs - see GP1 to GP5;



Fig 5 Land Use and Scale of development in the vicinity of the site

4.0 The Surrounding Landscape and Townscape

- As one travels along Heywood Old Road, particularly from south to north, there is an experience of the following build types;
 - Historic Terraced properties and semi-detached properties line the road in ribbon form as the road ascends from the junction with the A576 Old Hall Lane. These are either red-brick or rendered/painted and although originally with slate tile roofs, there is now a wide mix of material type, window material and colour and other variations in form, set back, height above the road etc...They are largely two storey;
 - Inter-War and mid-20th century properties, often semi-detached, red-brick properties with slate, clay or concrete tiles and of varying proportions. These are largely 2 storey properties;
 - As the road starts to descend after the crown of the hill, and the distant wind turbines become apparent beyond the valley between Middleton and Heywood, historic terraced properties appear again, particularly to the eastern side of the road, less so to the west, where views over the valley begin to appear. There are examples where these properties have been extended or converted to accommodate 3 storey's of accommodation. These properties are set notable closer to the back of pavement which accentuates their appearance (see GP4);
 - Towards the bottom of the hill as the land levels near the application site, historic farmhouse/cottage styled properties appear in clusters, alongside the road, and either with render/paint applied or occasionally brick. It appears that following road-widening, the historic terraced properties that fronted Heywood [Old] Road have been removed and those that remain now side-onto the road set a number of metres back, and with parking areas visible through the entrances. This has had an effect on the character of the former hamlet that the application site was a part. The frontage to the existing building with steps and veranda appears somewhat out of character with the widened and re-enforced busy Heywood Old Road. The site building is now a little anomalous, sat proud on the bend in the road;

4.0 The Surrounding Landscape and Townscape



GP1 - Terraced properties at southern end of Heywood Old Road



GP2 - 20th century semi-detached properties further north up the hill, south of the site.



GP3 - View N-N.W. Historic terraces at the brow of the hill. Large converted 3 storey property to middle of image and distant hilltop views of windfarm.



GP4 - Row of historic terraces and large converted 3 storey property fronting Heywood Old Road, circa 250m south of the site. Rural land to the west.



GP5 - Large David Lloyd leisure complex and car parking area immediately to the east of the site.



GP6 - Boulevard north of the site with playing fields to the left and rural land to the right (west) beyond field hedgerow.



GP7 - Light Industrial Unit, 230m N-E of the site, on the eastern side of Heywood Old Road.

5.0 Key Viewpoints

Key Viewpoints

- 5.1 The key viewpoints of this site include from public roads and footpaths and from residential properties in the vicinity of the site immediately to the south-west, west and north. Meaningful views of the site are not possible from the east (David Lloyd site) or the south (unless immediately adjacent to the site itself within the open small 'park' area). The site is generally well contained by the boundary vegetation, the screening effect of number 344 Heywood Old Road and the properties on the western side of Heywood Old Road. Furthermore, the siting on the bend in the busy road means long distance views of the site are not possible. Thus, any meaningful visual effects are entirely localised. The identified viewpoints are described visually at Fig. 6 and in the respective Viewpoint Photographs, and have been allocated viewpoint (VP) numbers as follows:
- VP1 – People using Heywood Old Road, travelling in a northerly direction experience views of the application site from distances of between 50m and 5m when travelling north. The views in the vicinity of the site are generally well contained by boundary vegetation and built form to both sides of the road, although glimpses of the more open land to the west are appreciable when looking away from the site. The views of the site and site building are limited and will be fleeting only if travelling in a car where the main focus will be on the busy road, and particularly the bend in the road adjacent to the site itself. Users traveling on bike will be equally engaged on the road, although users of public transport or passengers of vehicles will experience views of the main site building and the car parking area to the south of that building as well as an appreciation of the mature tree cover to boundaries. Nonetheless, the views are very localised in the context of wider views which are experienced when looking north-west or west, circa 100m north of the application site as the built form disappears to the west of the road. – see Viewpoint 1.
 - VP2 – People using Heywood Old Road, traveling in a southerly direction experience views of the application site from distances of between 50m and 5m when traveling south. The views in the vicinity of the site are generally well contained by boundary vegetation and built form to both sides of the road, especially 344 Heywood Old Road. Experientially, there is a small transition from an appreciation of the wider landscape to the west prior to rounding the bend in front of the application site as built form and vegetation contains that view in the immediate vicinity of the site. The views of the site and site building are limited and will be fleeting only if traveling in a car where the main focus will be on the busy road, and particularly the bend in the road adjacent to the site itself. Users traveling on bike will be equally engaged on the road, although users of public transport or passengers of vehicles will experience views of the main site building and the car parking area to the south of that building as well as an appreciation of the mature tree cover to boundaries. Nonetheless, the views are very localised in the context of the wider views which hitherto would have been a mix of countryside, playing fields and large commercial/industrial sheds before reaching the site. – see Viewpoint 2.
 - VP3 – Residents of the properties on the opposite side of Heywood Old Road may experience oblique, limited and/or partial views of the application site building from

5.0 Key Viewpoints

within the dwellings, but more likely from within the garden areas from a distance of between 10m and 35m. The relevant dwellings are set perpendicular to the application site and have no principal windows facing directly towards the site itself. Thus, views are restricted. Any clearer views possible would be limited to upper floor windows or specific locations within the private gardens where vegetation does not screen the site building. The site building is more apparent due to its siting a short distance back from pavement towards the front of the site.

- VP4 – Users of Simon Lane, may experience views of the upper part of the application site building from distances of circa 150m looking in a south-easterly direction, above intermediate vegetation and residential properties at the junction of Simon Lane and Heywood Old Road, which are in the foreground of the view. As such, any meaningful views of the site are very limited, even in winter months. A public footpath is shown on maps to cross the field to the north of Simon Lane, although evidence of access is not clearly apparent on the ground. In any event, the viewpoint from Simon Lane is anticipated to give a clear indication of what might be visible from south-easterly views from the footpath. – see Viewpoint 4.

5.2 There are only a limited number of public footpaths in the immediate area, with the more meaningful routes lying a notable distance from the site with no appreciation of the site. Due to the separation distance, field hedgerows and trees, the mature trees around the perimeter of the application site, woodland block and other built form in the area, the site is well screened from most other public viewpoints and other residential properties south, south-east and to the north of the application site, limiting any meaningful views of the site and buildings. Nonetheless, the selected Receptor Groups above are considered to

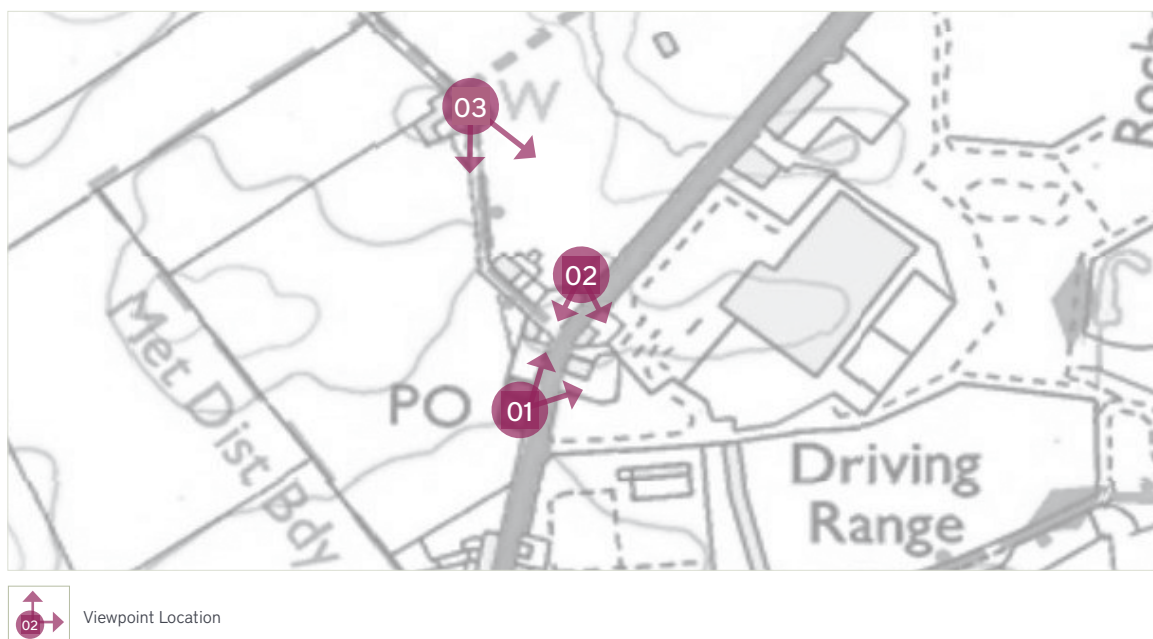


Fig 6 Viewpoint Location Plan

5.0 Key Viewpoints



VP01 View from in close proximity to the application site on Heywood Old Road, looking North



VP02 View from in close proximity to the application site on Heywood Old Road, looking South



VP03 Glimpsed view of the existing site building from above the hedgerow on Simon Lane. The view is only possible from a very small section of the road when the evergreen trees and built form do not block the view. The view is from circa 150m away.

Fig 7 Viewpoint Photos

6.0 Key Landscape Policies

6.1 The relevant landscape-related Local Plan policies for this application are as follows:

Core Strategy Policy G5:

...2. Development in Protected Open Land

Development on open land outside the urban area and not in the green belt will be resisted unless:

- a). it is limited development that would be acceptable were it in the green belt; or
- b). it is small scale development which is consistent with other detailed policies and site allocations in the Local Development Plan; or
- c). it satisfies 3 below [to do with releasing protected open land]

UDP Saved Policy D/10:

...Within the areas of Protected Open Land defined on the Proposals Map, development proposals will be permitted that fall within one or more of the following categories:

- a) development which would be acceptable were it in the Green Belt; or
- b) limited infilling within an established pocket of housing or industry where this is in scale with the area and will not adversely affect its character or surroundings; or
- c) a limited extension to an existing building which:
 - i). forms part of an existing source of employment; or
 - ii). is necessary for the establishment of a new enterprise or business which satisfies other policies of the Plan; and
 - iii). is sited within the existing curtilage of the business concerned, and will not adversely affect the character of the surrounding land and its openness.

Where new buildings are permitted, they should be sited to form a group with existing buildings. Where this is not possible, buildings, car parking areas and other new structures, should be sited where they will be well screened and unobtrusive in the landscape. All buildings and extensions should be of a high standard of design, using materials that are compatible with the landscape, and should not detract from the visual amenity and environment of adjacent Green Belt.

7.0 The Design Principles

- 7.1 Following feedback from a previous planning application, this scheme has been adjusted and set back from the road, within the application site. The style of the built form has been updated and the elevation and massing broken up through use of different tiers of accommodation at upper floor levels. Other key principles have been set out below:
- The principle of a large building on this generous plot is considered to be in keeping with the varied character of the area and the historic context of the site;
 - The building should appear to address the road, and hardstanding retained to the front part of the site, screened from the road by new hedgerow and tree planting
 - A set back from Heywood Old Road would respond more favourably to the evolving character in the area and reduce the impact of the built form;
 - A large 2/3 storey building would relate to other similar scaled built form fronting Heywood Old Road in the area;
 - Retaining open areas to the north (as communal open space) will help to allay concerns in terms of overbearing relative to the neighbour at the north;
 - Introducing characteristic hedgerows and trees to the front boundary would enhance the streetscene and respond favourably to the green infrastructure apparent on Heywood Old Road, particularly in the vicinity of, and to the north of, the site;

8.0 The Development Proposals

- 8.1 The redevelopment of the application site comprises the demolition of the existing extended former Inn and restaurant building, and the construction of a new part 2 storey, part 3 storey apartment building set further back into the site.
- 8.2 The building would contain 10no. apartments in total with 200% parking provision within the site. including 1no. disabled parking space.
- 8.3 The design involves a strong angular form which is seen within the wider area. The building would be constructed of characteristic brick, with a sedum roof. Glazing to all elevations to reflect the apparent rhythm of similar scaled properties in the area.
- 8.4 All of the important boundary trees, shrubs and hedges, which are located largely off-site would be retained and supplemented as part of the proposals.
- 8.5 The scheme involves the reduction in the overall hardstanding area by consolidating the parking to the western portion of the site and introducing a 'soft' area to the north to create utilisable shared and private garden space for the residents.
- 8.6 The northern and western (front) boundaries would be strengthened with hedge and tree planting, which will in turn lift the streetscene, and the use of selected standard trees to the northern boundary, would add further screening to safeguard the privacy of the residents of number 344 Heywood Old Road.
- 8.7 Windows and habitable rooms have been oriented to ensure that residential amenity concerns can be addressed and would overall represent an improvement in amenity terms when compared with the existing use and built form.
- 8.8 These proposals are described in more detail in the landscape layout plan (M2920.01-V2), on the architects drawings of Watergrove CGI Ltd and within the supporting planning documents.

8.0 The Development Proposals



Fig 8

3-D Modeled Views of the Proposals. They appear entirely comfortable in terms of massing, scale and form within the plot. The set back reduces the prominence. The planting enhances the frontage and relates well to other boundary planting in the immediate vicinity.

8.0

The Development Proposals

Existing Aerial Capture



Proposed Aerial Capture



Fig 9

Satellite View - Artists Impression of Before and After - The grain and green infrastructure appear as comfortable and/or positive features in the context.

9.0 Appraisal of the Proposal

Townscape Effects

- 9.1 It is considered that the proposed layout of the apartment building on site has responded to the mixed context, by:
- Keeping the Western and northern parcel of the site 'open', thus responding positively to the streetscene and neighbour at 344 Heywood Old Road. The mature tree and dense vegetated belt beyond the site to the east and south envelopes the built form and helps to assimilate it into its setting.
 - Utilising a portion the previously developed part of the site for built form.
 - Setting the building back from the road frontage, to allow for a perceived reduction in mass and the planting of frontage hedgerow and trees.
 - Strengthening the streetscene frontage by incorporating street trees and hedgerows that are characteristic of Heywood Old Road thus strengthening the openness of the 'park' south of the site.
 - Utilising traditional Brick and glazing elevational detailing.
 - Introducing a sedum living roofing system brings added environmental and biodiversity benefits.
 - Adding to the mix of built form in terms of scale, form and materiality in a sensitive and responsive manner

9.0 Appraisal of the Proposal

Visual Effects

- 9.2 Due to the siting and form of the proposed apartment building, along with the existing dense boundary screening (trees and shrubs) which will be retained as part of the proposals, only the front part of the apartment building would be readily visible, and from only a very small section of Heywood Old Road in close proximity to the application site. The approximate range of the view is described earlier in this document as a circa 100m section of the road and is described visually by viewpoint photographs, VP01 and VP02. Those views will be mitigated by the proposed frontage tree and hedge planting and the set back of the built form (circa 6.5m from back of pavement) – see Visualisation 01 and 02.
- 9.3 In addition, a small section of the roof of the proposed building might be visible from a small section of Simon Lane when looking back east towards the application site. The upper part of the roof would be visible, similar to the existing building, above foreground mature tree and hedgerow planting and built form at the junction of Simon Lane and Heywood Old Road. However, this is a glimpsed view only (see VP03) and from an oblique angle and a distant section of the road. It is also read in the context of other built form and dense vegetation in the foreground and backdrop of the view.
- 9.4 Given the responsive massing and materiality proposed, in addition to the additional set back from Heywood Old Road, as well as the siting of the built form and the contained nature of the site itself, it is anticipated that the visual effect of the proposal will not be significant. In light of the above, and the semi-urban context within which the site is located, it is considered that the proposals will not cause any undue harm to the open nature of the site, nor the visual receptors which experience views of it.

The following Visualisations have been created to scale by modelling the proposed property relative to adjacent buildings and then inserting into viewpoint photographs (taken with a 50mm lens) to a good degree of accuracy in terms scale and appearance.

They demonstrate that, in terms of massing, scale and form, the proposals are entirely comfortable in their context

9.0 Appraisal of the Proposal



Fig.10

Visualisation 01 - Artists Impression of Proposed View from Charcoal Road looking east from circa 200m west of the application site



Fig.11

Visualisation 02 - Artists Impression of Proposed View from Heywood Old Road, looking South.

9.0 Appraisal of the Proposal

Response to Relevant Policies

- 9.5 Policy G5 of the Core Strategy and Policy D/10 of the UDP are relatively consistent with each other.
- 9.6 Policy D/10 is a little more proscriptive in terms of the guidance on seeking clustering of proposed buildings, and siting them so that they are not intrusive in the landscape. Policy G5 of the Core Strategy is less prescriptive, although it is considered that the same emphasis should apply when determining the visual and townscape/landscape effect of the development proposals in their setting.
- 9.7 The application site is not in the green belt. If it were, the entire site would be classed as previously developed land.
- 9.8 As such, re-development of the application site would not fall to be considered as “inappropriate development”. Therefore, no very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated to overcome harm by reason of inappropriateness.
- 9.9 Ordinarily, if this application site was in the green belt, there would need to be an assessment of harm to the openness of the green belt and the purposes of including land in the green belt.
- 9.10 The wording of the core strategy policy is unusual in that the site is not in the green belt and can thus not be considered to contribute to the purposes of green belt, as otherwise, it would have been included within the green belt.
- 9.11 The parcel of protected open land within which the application site falls, and particularly within the vicinity of the application site, is developed, with built form to all sides of the site.
- 9.12 The most sensitive boundary of the application site in landscape terms is the western boundary, in that it is closest to the more open rural (green belt) land on the western side of Heywood Old Road.
- 9.13 The decision to set back the proposed dwelling from that western boundary and retaining 2-storey accommodation to the front part of the development directly addresses any concerns in terms of visual impact at the western boundary of the site.
- 9.14 Recent case law has confirmed that Visual Impact is an important green belt consideration when assessing harm. The set back of circa 24m from Heywood Old Road will notably reduce the projection and perceived massing of the proposed building away from the most sensitive boundary and sensitive western viewpoints.
- 9.15 Sufficient distance has been retained to all boundaries, and the western and northern part of the site has remained open. The mature trees enveloping the site will be retained and effectively screen the application site, even when the trees are not in leaf.
- 9.17 There is a variety of scale, appearance and massing in the built form in the general area, particularly along Heywood Old Road, and the proposed apartment building relates well to the

9.0 Appraisal of the Proposal

larger stepped height buildings which front the road, often in closer proximity than is proposed here.

- 9.18 As such, the scheme is considered to respond sensitively to the site and environs, the varied townscape character and retains the more 'open' feel experienced from the western and southern boundaries of the site.

8.0 Summary and Conclusion

- 10.1 The desk and site-based assessments which have informed this appraisal have also shaped the development proposals as part of an iterative process.
- 10.2 The site is previously developed land and almost entirely covered in built form or hardstanding. The boundary planting is a strong aspect of the site, particularly the mature trees, hedge and shrubs around the eastern and southern boundaries, planted off-site, adjacent to the common boundary.
- 10.3 All of the existing mature trees and shrubs would be retained as part of the proposals, the hardstanding would be reduced and shared and private garden areas would be introduced as part of a comprehensive package of landscape proposals.
- 10.4 The site is set within a designated area of Protected Open Land. It is not in the green belt, although the relevant landscape-related policies (policy G5 of the Core Strategy and saved policy D/10 of the UDP) detail that an application for development in such an area should be considered in a similar manner to green belt development.
- 10.5 As an entirely previously developed site, its re-development would, by definition, not be inappropriate development were it in the green belt, and as such, very special circumstances would not need to be shown.
- 10.6 There would be no impact on the 5 purposes of including the land in the green belt as otherwise the land would be designated as green belt if it did serve those functions.
- 10.7 In terms of actual or perceived harm, the site is incredibly well contained by vegetation and/or other built form in the vicinity of the site. The proposals would introduce a building of appropriate scale, form and layout, with the massing broken up through siting (set back), a varied roof line and the projection of a central glazed atrium which joins the 2 distinct parts of the whole building.
- 10.8 The design of the apartment building is responsive to other similar scaled built form in the area and the introduction of frontage hedge and tree planting will positively add to the green infrastructure along Heywood Old Road and respond to the evolving character in the area.
- 10.9 The whole process has been informed through an iterative design process and the submitted visualisations demonstrate that the proposals would be entirely comfortable in their context.

Conclusion

- 10.10 This appraisal ascertains that the proposed development is not expected to generate any unacceptable landscape or visual effects by virtue of its appropriateness to its context. Furthermore, it is concluded that the proposals would conform with policy G5 of the Core Strategy and saved policy D/10 of the Rochdale UDP.

A.1 Appendix 1

Land Use and Scale Plan



KEY
Use

Commercial/
Industrial/Leisure

Residential

Scale

Up to modest 2 storey

Tall 2 storey / 3 storey

A.2 Appendix 2

Visualisation 1 - Before and After (Looking North)

Existing View



Proposed View



A.3 Appendix 3

Visualisation 2 - Before and After (Looking South)

Existing



Proposed View



A.4 Appendix 4

Aerial Image - Before and After Visualisation

Existing Aerial Capture



Proposed Aerial Capture



