

SEQUENTIAL ASSESSMENT

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

**296 YORKSHIRE STREET
ROCHDALE**

INTRODUCTION

The site forms a long vacant residential unit along a terrace row along Yorkshire Street, Rochdale. The property is Located within the defined urban area which sits between two prominent Local Centres (Yorkshire Street and Halifax Road). The proposal site sits 30m from Yorkshire Street Local Centre and is neighboured by a small clothing store with residential dwellings above.

The proposal looks to refurbish the interior of the building to form a new retail unit at ground floor along with residential use to the first floor via a two bedroom flat. The application site has stood vacant for a number of years, recently purchased by the applicant. Through various means the applicant has explored options to use the building including residential rental however the most viable, sustainable and economically beneficial option for the building would be to form a new Convenience Retail store to the ground floor given the area and existing retail use prevalent in the area and surrounding the site both within and outside the linear commercial area. The proposal would promote further consumer choice within the area and provide an easily accessible convenience location for the local community as well as contributing to new jobs in the area.

The intended occupier of the retail unit has not yet been confirmed; however assessment in to the floor area and availability for storage etc. to the ground floor, the retail unit will likely perform small local convenience function.

1. Sequential Assessment

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

1.2. Local 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.”

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”.

The proposal site forms an edge of centre example being only 30m from the edge of a Local Centre and the following assessment will analyse the viability and suitability of available sites within Local Centres and sites edge of Local Centres.

1.4. Justification of site selection process

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 with a suitable building and associated land to house a small parking area with some aspect and ideally within an area well connected to both Rochdale Town Centre and the wider Boroughs. 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 that offers between 45 – 55 square meters of ground floor retail space.

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.

Taking the above into consideration, a thorough site investigation has been conducted utilising online commercial property websites (Rightmove, Zoopla, On the Market) as well as discussions with local estate agents to assess the availability, sustainability and viability of alternative sites within or to the edge of the following designated Local Centres:

- Yorkshire Street Local Centre;
- Whitworth Street Local Centre;
- Halifax Road Local Centre.

3. Whitworth Local Centre

2) Duke Street Mill



While located edge of centre from Whitworth Local Centre, the property site is far too large in scale to be adopted for retail use by the applicant and would therefore **not be a suitable alternative to the proposal site.**

4. Halifax Road Local Centre

3) 105 Halifax Road



The property is located within the local centre of Halifax Road and forms a mid-terrace that sees considerable levels of footfall and passing trade. Internally the property does not provide adequate floor area for comfortable retail use (sales area, storage, w.c.). Off street parking is lacking considerably and there is no availability to service the site via deliveries etc. without causing serious disturbance to the main highway (Halifax Road). **The site is therefore unsuitable.**

5. Assessment of the Proposed Site.

The sites assessed have fallen short of the main criteria that the applicant required..

Paragraph 87 of the NPPF states that “when considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.”

In this instance, the proposed site is located 30m from the Local Centre of Yorkshire Street making the site an edge of centre site and preferable when considering NPPF. The site is accessible via sustainable modes of transport which directly link the site to the town centre with the network of public transport options. These include the Metro and bus services which run frequently, public transport does run immediately past the site with many locals and visitors using public transport to access the various sections of Yorkshire Street and its many retail and commercial establishments both in and out of the established linear commercial area.

The proposal site is capable of offering the required retail space following minor extension works to the rear while also providing ample external storage space for bins etc. unlike other properties listed in this report or along Yorkshire Street.

6. 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 Local Centres were assessed. The assessment confirmed that there were no sites that were sequentially preferable, as no sites could accommodate the required criteria for internal and external use. The proposal site provides availability for servicing and off street parking which is greatly lacking in many of the historic Local Centres.

The sequential assessment has considered potential sites for the location of a convenience retail store. It has been undertaken in accordance with relevant national and local planning guidance, highlighting the lack of appropriate sites within or to the edge of centre. Each site has been reviewed, considering its appropriateness, having regard to its availability, suitability and viability in accommodating the proposed scheme. However, taking into account the Applicant's business model and nature of the location of the sites assessed, none are considered sequentially preferable to the application site for the reasons set out. NPPF Paragraph 010 states that if there are no sequentially preferable locations available, the sequential test is passed.

The NPPF instructs that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits, as the above assessment outlines the site is located edge of centre and is by its nature preferred. The scheme would provide good sustainable development that meet planning policy requirements without adversely impacting the existing Local Centre or the surrounding residential buildings in any way.