

Wardle Academy

Planning Statement

December 2022

Contents

	Summary
01	Submission
02	Context
03	Site
04	Proposal
05	Policy Spotlight
06	Assessment
07	Conclusion

Summary

Rochdale is experiencing a chronic shortage of secondary school places. The expansion of Wardle Academy has been identified by Rochdale Council the solution to very immediate capacity constraints in September 2023, whilst new schools are under construction within the Borough.

No other alternative sites exist within the borough, with the ability to accomodate this immediate requirement for essential school places with Wardle Academy being uniquely placed to facilitate expansion.

Located within the Green Belt, the school cannot expand without a consequence to openness. However, the scale of the increase proposed is considered proportionate and therefore appropriate for the Green Belt location. Should an alternative view be taken it is considered that very special circumstances can be demonstrated, with a consequential compliance with Green Belt policy at both local and national level.

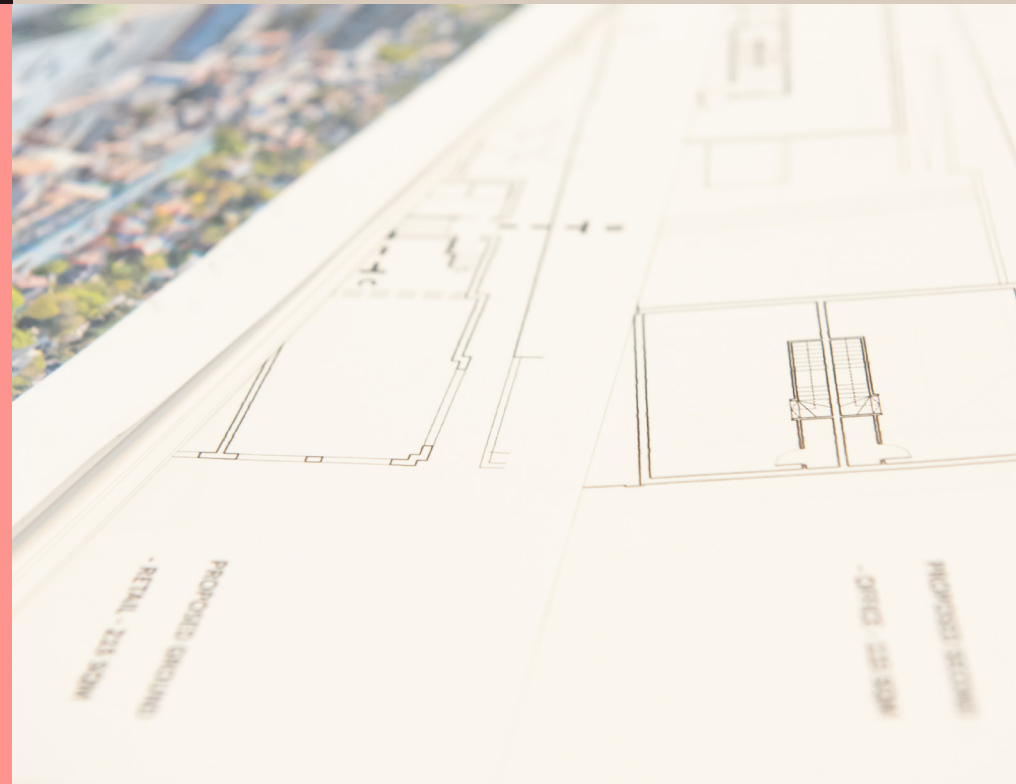
The proposal will further complement recent investment in the WaterSHED building to enable Wardle Academy to further support the increasing education needs within the borough.



View of the existing Anderson building

01

Submission



Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of the Applicant, Watergrove Trust, in support of a full planning application for the extension of the Anderson Suite at Wardle Academy, Birch Road, OL12 9RD [the Site].

Wardle Academy is a co-educational converter Academy school for pupils aged 11-16 based in Wardle, Rochdale. The Applicant operates the Academy and is the largest Trust within Rochdale.

The application is required to facilitate additional pupil spaces which will address a chronic shortage of secondary school places both within Rochdale and Greater Manchester. Expansion of the Academy has been identified by Rochdale Council as a solution to capacity constraints whilst new schools are under construction within the Borough. The case for expansion and the need for additional pupil spaces is outlined within this Statement as well as a demonstration of the development's compliance with all levels of planning policy.

The description of development is:

'Extension to existing Anderson Suite South building including access and all associated works.'

This statement confirms that the proposal satisfies the key policy tests and summarises the submitted technical reports for officers.

The Submission Package.

052_PLN_090	Site Location Plan
052_PLN_091	Proposed Block Plan
052_PLN_100	Existing Site and Roof Plan
052_PLN_101	Existing Ground Floor Plan
052_PLN_102	Existing First Floor Plan
052_PLN_130	Existing East and West Elevations
052_PLN_131	Existing South Elevation
052_PLN_200	Proposed Site and Roof Plan
052_PLN_201	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
052_PLN_202	Proposed First Floor Plan
052_PLN_300	Proposed East and West Elevations
052_PLN_301	Proposed South Elevation
052_PLN_302	Proposed Long Section
052_PLN_303	Proposed Cross Section
052_PLN_700	CGI view from Playing Fields with WaterSHED
052_PLN_701	CGI view from neighbouring houses
052_PLN_702	CGI Aerial View

Design and Access Statement (Define Architects)

Planning Statement (Eden)

Transport Statement

02

Context



Context

In 2013 the Academy moved into a new school building with brand new facilities (local planning authority reference 10/D53838 and 12/D55280). These facilities were later expanded in 2021 to provide additional teaching accommodation known as 'The WaterSHED' (reference 20/01552/FUL).

The 2021 expansion provided 100 additional places; 50 for 2021 and 50 for 2022 intakes. It was acknowledged in the associated Planning Officer reports for both applications that there had been a growing shortage of year 7 places and that some families had been offered school places further than the statutory 3 miles distance. The Council had to provide bus passes to facilitate transport to school in these instances, without any central government funding to cover the expense.

Wardle Academy has total capacity for approximately 1,200 students but in recent years has been oversubscribed. The Local Education Authority, Rochdale Borough Council, requires the Academy to increase its capacity further to meet existing demand levels.

At the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education meeting on 22nd November 2022, the Council acknowledged that there is a shortage of secondary school places across Greater Manchester. In Rochdale this has been exacerbated by an increased in-flow of residents over 2021-2022, and development pausing at the new Littleborough Star Leadership Academy and Heywood SEN School.

According to the Department for Education (DfE), neither school will be finished and open until at least the 2024/2025 year. As Rochdale Council has a statutory duty to offer every pupil living in the borough, who applies, a secondary school place, existing schools have to meet this additional demand until either of the above mentioned developments are completed.

The Council receives 'Basic Need' funding to provide additional school places for both permanent and temporary school building expansions and bulge classes. Wardle Academy will be in receipt of part of that funding allocated to Rochdale Council to facilitate an expansion of its current teaching facilities because current forecasts show insufficient places to accommodate the 2023 pupil intake.

The Academy is tasked with providing 50 additional pupil spaces by September 2023 through a classroom expansion.

In addition to the increase in pupil places needing more teaching space, there will be increased pressure on support services, particularly the existing prep kitchen.

The existing kitchen is at maximum capacity and will be unable to provide hot meals for all pupils once the intake increases. The kitchen is also located at the opposite end of the school to the WaterSHED and the Anderson Suite. Currently pupils at this end of the school can purchase cold food and paninis from the "grab and go" within the WaterSHED, but the school would like to be able to expand this menu and provide hot food for pupils in this area of the school as well. Therefore a new prep kitchen capable of catering hot meals to 300 pupils is needed.



View of the new WaterSHED Building

03

Site



Site



Photographs of existing site

The site is located to the south of the existing Anderson Suite at Wardle Academy. It was most recently used as the construction compound for the recently completed 'The WaterSHED' development at Wardle Academy for a period of 3 years. Prior to being a site compound the site was used for surface level car parking, providing 12 spaces.

The site is considered to constitute previously developed land (PDL) given its association with the wider School complex and its use as a construction compound, albeit temporary.

The site is bound by 2.4m high mesh security fencing in all directions, with gated access provided to a playing field to the west. There are no trees within the site boundaries.

The Anderson Suite, which is to be extended, is constructed of redbrick with a low pitched slate roof.

Wardle Academy comprises 5 interconnected buildings which provide a variety of teaching accommodation and supporting services. A large area of car parking is located to the north which provides parking for staff and visitors. The Academy benefits from a number of playing fields including tennis courts, Astro-turf pitches, basketball / netball courts and a large grassed area providing space for football, athletics and cricket.

The site is well served by public transport with a bus stop located immediately outside the main entrance to the School, with services provided to Rochdale, Firgrove, Littleborough, Milnrow and Stansfield.

The immediate area is residential in nature, with dense residential development associated with Hurstead to the south and Wardle to the north.

The site has an extensive planning history, detailed at Appendix 1.



Site Stats

Ecological Designations None

Flood Zone One

Tree Preservation Orders Zero

Site Area 0.13ha

Public Rights of Way None

04

Proposal



Proposal



CGI visuals of proposed development

This full application proposes a 2-storey, pitched roof extension to the Anderson Suite Building southwards into the adjacent vacant car park. The application also includes internal remodelling to the existing building to relocate toilets and facilitate the extension.

The extension amounts to approximately 383.92sq.m of additional floorspace and comprises:

- 4 no. additional teaching classrooms (between 60sq.m- 65sq.m respectively);
- Prep kitchen to cater hot meals for circa 300 pupils (60sq.m);
- Relocation of existing female WCs at ground floor; and
- Internal remodelling to existing classrooms at First Floor.

12 parking bays will be lost as a result of the development; however, they have not been available for use for the past 3 years because the site had the WaterSHED site compound on it. Therefore, the loss of spaces will not affect the operation of the school.

The additional classroom spaces created will provide accommodation for 120 pupils – the number required by the DfE with an additional 20 spaces to future proof.

Two classrooms will be provided at ground floor level, with another two at first floor. The prep kitchen will be situated on the ground floor, with associated WC and changing area. The Additional Language (EAL) office will also be relocated from elsewhere and provided at first floor level.

Proposal

The extension is a combination of two and single storey in design, with the single storey element being broadly triangular in shape. The stepped height and irregular footprint of the extension allows for separation distances to be achieved that protect residential amenity whilst also providing the required quantum of floorspace. Windows have also been omitted from the southern elevation of the extension to ensure that there will be no overlooking of the neighbouring homes.

In recognition of both the site's Green Belt location and the sensitive nature of the relationship between the school and residents, the flat roofed single storey element will accommodate a green roof to soften the appearance of the extension.

Full details of the scheme design and its materiality is provided within the Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by Define. The DAS shows that the extension has specifically been designed to be sympathetic to both the Anderson Suite and The WaterSHED, using a combination of redbrick and sinusoidal metal cladding



Proposed materials

Proposal



Proposed Ground Floor Plan 052_PLN_201

Access

The existing vehicular and pedestrian access points from the highway are not affected by the proposed development. However, it has been necessary to consider the access points to the school's playing fields, which is currently via the site.

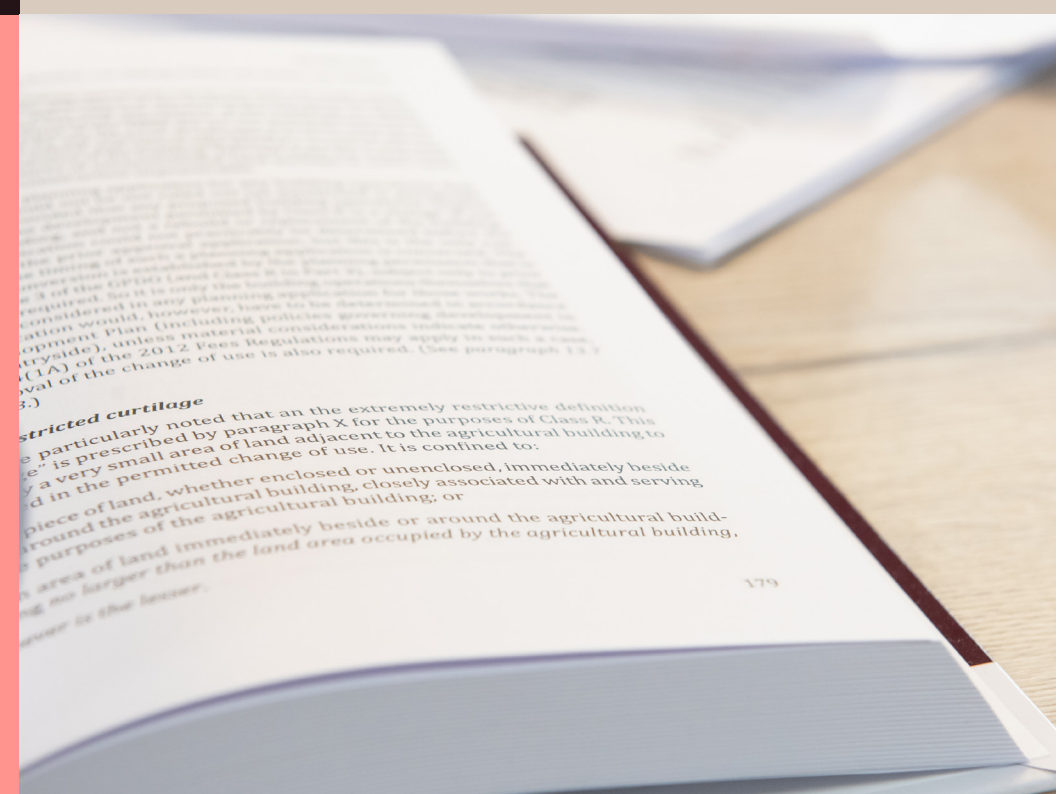
A new vehicular route to the south of the extension is proposed to maintain emergency access to the playing fields. Inclusion of this route requires the removal of an existing mowed lawn area and lamp post, as well as the repositioning of the playing field gate access.

A kerb to the east of the Anderson Suite building will also be removed to facilitate a turning head that will allow vehicles to enter and exit the area in a forward gear.

Internally, a new fire escape route will be provided in between the existing staff room and a new classroom within the extension. The girls WC is currently in this location so it will be relocated next to the Boys WC at the opposite end of the building to facilitate the new fire escape route.

05

Policy Spotlight



Policy Spotlight

In accordance with Section 70(2) of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the planning application must be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Applications which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted Development Plan for Rochdale Borough Council comprises:

- Saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan 2001-2016 (UDP) (Adopted 2006).
- Core Strategy (Adopted 2016).
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (Adopted 2012).
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan Document (Adopted 2013).

There are no adopted Neighbourhood Plans relevant to the application site.

In addition to the statutory Development Plan, the following documents are material to the determination of this application:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Published 2021).
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Published 2021).
- National Design Guide (Published 2021).
- Design and Planning Process – Good Practice Guide SPD.
- Urban Design Guide SPD (Published 2007).
- Places for Everyone (PfE).
- Rochdale Draft Allocations Plan.

Places for Everyone hearing sessions concluded on 30th November 2022 and main modifications are now being made to the plan. In the emerging Places for Everyone document, the site remains within its Green Belt designation. It is anticipated that its allocation will not change as part of any modifications. There are no other elements of Places for Everyone that are relevant to this application.

The emerging Rochdale Draft Allocations Plan has been put on hold whilst Places for Everyone progresses, it is therefore of limited weight in the decision making process.

Relevant policies of the Development Plan and all material considerations are summarised at Appendix 2 and have been taken into account by the proposal.

Examination of the site characteristics, the Development Plan and material considerations has led us to establish that the key considerations to be examined by this Statement to demonstrate acceptability in planning terms are:

- compliance with Green Belt policy;
- protection of residential amenity; and
- access.

06

Assessment



Green Belt Policy.

As demonstrated earlier within this Statement and the supporting DAS, the site comprises vacant, tarmacked land, most recently in use as a construction compound whilst the Academy was expanded. Whilst there has been no permanent built form on the site, the site is considered to constitute previously developed land given its intrinsic connection to the wider School and its recent function as a construction compound.

The site is designated as Green Belt within the adopted Development Plan and remains as such within the emerging Places for Everyone document. It is pertinent to note, however, that the site is immediately adjacent to the Defined Urban Area and the site abuts this boundary to the south. This is pertinent because despite its land use designation it sits with an urban backdrop.

Chapter 13 of NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land, where paragraph 147 defines inappropriate development as harmful to the Green Belt. All development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it meets the list of exceptions at paragraphs 149 and 150 of NPPF.

The policy position set by NPPF is reinforced by Core Strategy Policy G4 which also states that development in the Green Belt will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed not to be inappropriate by national planning policies, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. However, the policy also says that "limited infilling and redevelopment where this maintains beneficial uses and does not harm the Green Belt" will be allowed.

One exception to inappropriate development at NPPF paragraph 149 c) is; *'the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building'.*

'A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are...the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;' (Paragraph 149c).

NPPF Paragraph 149

Assessment

To understand whether the proposals would be capable of falling within the exception identified at paragraph 149 c) and subsequently whether the proposed extension would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the school we have examined the scale of the extension relative to the Anderson Suite and wider school.

This shows that the proposed extension is an increase of less than 41% on the Anderson Suite, so subservient to that building in isolation. However, the Anderson Suite is one of five interlinked buildings in the school curtilage, taken in this context, the additional footprint and volume is minimal.

	Existing	Proposed	Total	%
Gross Internal Area (GIA)(m2)	926.1 m2	383.92m2	1310.02 m2	41%
Gross External Area (GEA)(m2)	978.5 m2	421.58 m2	1,400.08 m2	43%
Volume (m3)	3,684.3 m3	1,558.8 m3	5,243.1 m3	42%

When examining compliance with this exception it is also important to note that the extension is located such that it is between the school and the settlement boundary, it does not further encroach built form into the Green Belt. The amount of 'built environment' will not be materially larger within the Green Belt as a result of the proposed development.

This is an important fact because it shows compliance with the above mentioned extract of Policy G4 and protects the purpose of the Green Belt in the North of the Borough which Policy G4 defines its primary role as: "to prevent encroachment into the countryside (i.e. land north of Rochdale and Heywood, east of Rochdale)".

The proposal will not harm the five purposes of the Green Belt identified in NPPF. These are:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of the large built-up areas.
The development does not encroach further into the Green Belt than the existing built form of Wardle Academy.
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
The location and scale of the proposal prevents this.
3. To safeguard the countryside from encroachment.
The proposal extends the southern elevation of the Anderson Suite, this faces the settlement boundary, not open countryside, therefore, does not encroach into open countryside.
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
The site is not within the setting of a historic town.
5. To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The proposed development is site specific, it cannot be situated in isolation elsewhere away from the main school complex and still achieve its required aim.

In spite of the above, it is appreciated that compliance with NPPF paragraph 149 c) is open to interpretation, therefore, should a different view be taken we have set out below very special circumstances to justify the principle of development in the Green Belt, with reference to Paragraph 148 of the NPPF which states:

"When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

Assessment

On the basis of the case set out above, we do not believe that the development is inappropriate. However, if the Council take an opposing view then according to paragraph 147 of NPPF 'Very Special Circumstances' need to be demonstrated.

The assessment of very special circumstances (also referred to as 'VSC') is explained by NPPF Paragraph 148 which is as follows:

'When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.'

It is our firm view that 'Very Special Circumstances' exist to justify the principle of development in the Green Belt should it be deemed necessary for these to outweigh any perceived harm. If Planning Officers deem that the exception identified above does not apply then according to paragraph 147 of NPPF the development is appropriate and Officers have to first establish the level of 'harm' and then decide the weight to be applied to any 'Very Special Circumstances' that exist.

In this instance, due to the fact that the proposed extension is small in scale, set against an urban backdrop adjacent to the settlement boundary and does not encroach built form further into the Green Belt the level of harm to the openness of the Green Belt is minimal.

By contrast, there are very strong special circumstances that outweigh this harm set out overleaf:

- provision of vital education facilities; and
- no alternative sites.



CGI visual of proposed development

01

Vital education facilities

It has been clearly set out within the Context Section of this Statement that there is a pressing demand for additional school places. The need for the proposed development to take place is fully expressed by the Council Cabinet Report from 22nd November which specifically identifies Wardle Academy as being able to provide a solution to the chronic shortfall in Secondary pupil places.

Existing educational provision in Rochdale is not sufficient to meet the September 2023 pupil intake without the proposed new schools being completed, or an existing facility being extended.

The former is not going to happen by September 2023, therefore, the latter is essential and in full accordance with

Strategic Policy SO1 of the Core Strategy which says that the Council will focus on supporting provision of education facilities. The focus on delivery of education follows through into Policy E2 as well, which clearly says that delivery of infrastructure, including education will be promoted and Policy C7 that expresses a commitment to improving education and providing education facilities.

The delivery of essential school places as very special circumstances to justify development in the Green Belt is also supported by paragraph 95 of NPPF which requires that weight be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools through decisions on applications.

02

No alternative site

As touched upon above, there are two options for increasing the number of available school places in Rochdale, the completion of committed new schools and / or the extension of an existing school. The proposed new schools present the long-term solution to the shortage of school places but unfortunately are not able to solve the issue in time for the 2023 school year when additional school places will be needed. It is clearly expressed in the Cabinet Report that the proposed school places will be filled as soon as they are made available

The options for meeting the identified need have been fully explored by the Council. The conclusion, which was presented within the November Cabinet Report is that an extension to Wardle Academy is a logical solution.

It is demonstrated by the Cabinet Report that other schools in Rochdale are also at capacity, and none have expressed an ability to provide more places.

It is also material that the whole of Wardle Academy is located within the Green Belt, it is not possible to extend the school without building within the Green Belt.



Residential Amenity

Rochdale Borough Council's guidelines for residential development SPD recommends a minimum of 21m between directly facing windows, with 14m between a principle window and a two storey secondary elevation, and 10m between principle windows to a single storey secondary elevation.

Whilst these standards are applied to new residential development, and this application proposes an education use, the proposed extension has been designed to apply the required separation distance to the neighbouring homes and limit the impact on residents through loss of privacy. There is 13.8m between the two storey element of the school and neighbouring homes and 13.3m between the homes and the single storey element. Windows have also been excluded on the closest part of the extension so that it would not allow users of the prep kitchen to directly view the rear of homes.

By virtue of its siting, size and design, the proposal would not unduly impact the level of residential amenity enjoyed by any of the existing or future occupiers of surrounding properties by way of overshadowing, overbearing impact or a loss of privacy.

The proposed siting and design of lighting is not considered to be such that it would cause nuisance to adjacent neighbours on Green Meadow.

Full details of the lighting is provided within the DAS, which shows that there will not be undue light-spill created.

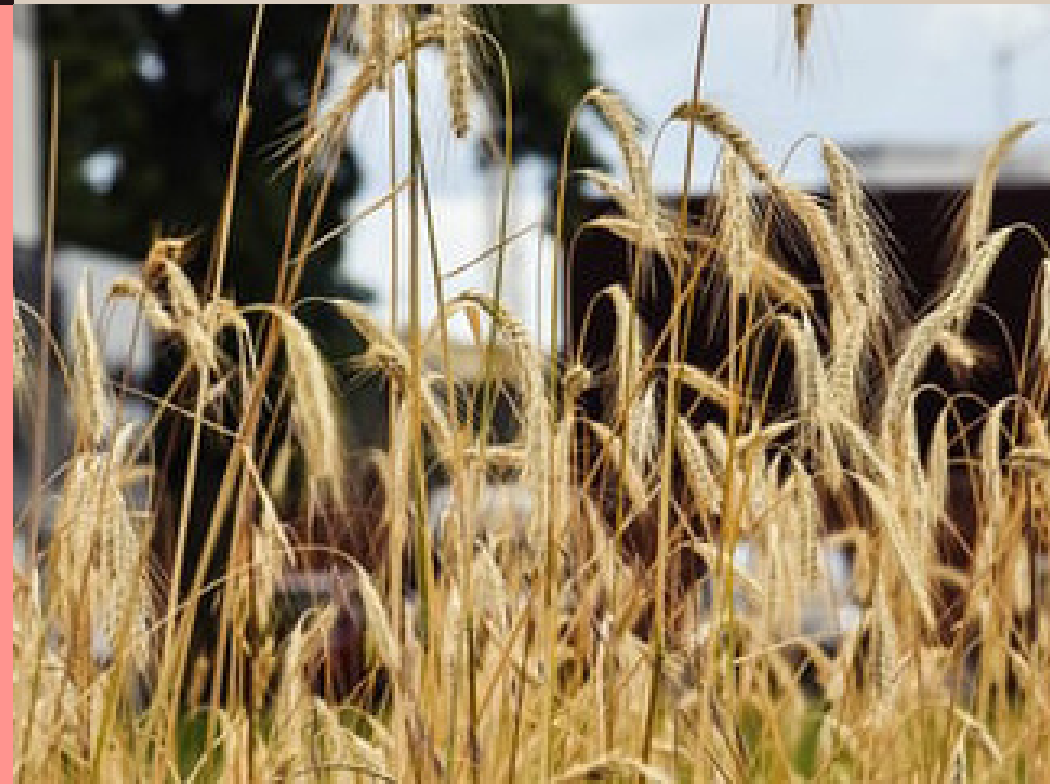
Safe Access

The application is supported by a Transport Statement prepared by Egg Transport as required by Core Strategy Policy T2. This demonstrates that, the site is accessible and can be accessed safely, including the proposed new access route for emergency vehicles.

Whilst the 12 no. parking spaces demarcated on the site will be lost, they have not been in use for nearly 3 years and the School continues to operate successfully without those spaces. Their loss is therefore not considered to be detrimental to the School's function and will not create a shortage of parking spaces to the detriment of highway or pupil safety.

07

Conclusion



Conclusion

This application proposes an extension to the existing Anderson Suite building at Wardle Academy which is situated within an area of designated Green Belt. The proposal seeks to provide additional classroom space and a new preparation kitchen to accommodate 50 no. pupils and cater hot meals to circa. 300 students.

The extension of Wardle Academy has been identified by the Council as a solution to the chronic shortfall in secondary spaces both within Rochdale and Greater Manchester. The need for secondary spaces is so pressing that the Academy is required to be extended prior to September 2023 to facilitate additional places before the next intake of students.

Whilst we believe that the extension is a proportionate addition to the Wardle Academy school complex, should the Council not take this view then very special circumstances have been identified as part of this application, which clearly outweigh any harm to the Green Belt.

The design of the extension is wholly appropriate and provides a high-quality solution that respects the existing building's character and serves its intended purpose. The design solution is innovative and promotes the development of an under-used parcel of land associated with the School's existing function.

The proposals will not unduly impact upon the residential amenity of nearby properties along Green Meadows and any lighting would not be of nuisance to those existing or future residents.

The proposed amendments to access and car parking are suitable and continue to provide safe access to the site for its users. The loss of car parking is not considered to impede the school's operation and this element is considered acceptable.

The proposals therefore meet the relevant policy criteria outline within the adopted and emerging Development Plan, as well as the Framework. A very special circumstances case is progressed and we respectfully ask that the application be granted permission.

Appendix 1 Planning History

Appendix 2 Planning Policies

Appendix 1

Reference	Description	Decision
12/D55478	Provision of a two-storey temporary classroom accommodation together with associated toilet blocks, hardstanding, and access.	Permitted Development on the 22nd of May 2012
12/55831/ANM	Non material amendment to planning permission 12/D55280 for the omission of photo voltaic panels and the provision of a combined heat and power plant to be partly enclosed with fencing and landscaping	Approved 30th July 2012.
13/00705/ANM	Non material amendment following planning permission 12/D55280 for the installation of photo voltaic solar panels.	Approved 29th August 2013.
14/00671/ANM	Non material amendment to planning permission 12/D55280 for the increase height of parapet wall to Block D.	Approved 24th July 2014.
20/01552/FUL	Conversion of existing sports hall building to provide teaching accommodation and the rection of a new single-storey entrance lobby.	Approved 1st March 2021.

Appendix 1 Planning History
Appendix 2 Planning Policies

Appendix 2

Core Strategy (2016)

Objective SO1 - To deliver a more prosperous economy: This objective highlights the importance of, and subsequently promotes the provision of educational facilities to improve skills.

Objective SO2 – To create successful and healthy communities: This objective highlights that in order to improve the general health and quality of people’s lives, access to health facilities and services, education, community and cultural facilities, and open space must be enhanced.

Objective SO3 – To improve design, image, and quality of place: This policy aims to raise design quality and promote sustainable development.

Policy C7 – Delivering educational facilities: The policy sets out that educational facilities will be improved to support wider skills training and the education of residents. Facilities should be located in appropriate and accessible locations, co-located with other educational related facilities, and support wider skills training. This policy importantly not only encourages the development of new facilities, but also the improvement of those that are already existing.

Policy C8 – Improving community, sport, leisure, and cultural activities: This policy emphasises that development that promotes community uses should be encouraged. Facilities should be located in accessible locations, and should serve the everyday needs of a community or neighbourhood.

Policy G4 – Protecting the Green Belt: This policy notes that development should not be built within the Green Belt (excluding development which is deemed not to be inappropriate by national planning guidance) unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. This policy importantly notes that the council will encourage the operation of major developed sites within the Green Belt and support limited infilling and redevelopment where this maintains beneficial uses and does not support or harm the Green Belt.

Policy P3 - Improve design of new development: This policy states specific requirements for new developments, particularly in terms of enhancing the borough’s identity and sense of place. This means developments must have regard to scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape and materials.

Policy DM1 – General development requirements: This policy sets out that all development proposals should be able to demonstrate that they:

- Are of high-quality design – creating an opportunity to enhance the quality of the area in which the development is located.
- Are compatible with surrounding land uses.
- Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy.
- Mitigate against any potential impacts associated with the development in terms of pollution and traffic generation
- Provide or demonstrate the availability of the service and community infrastructure necessary to meet local needs.

Appendix 2

Policy P3 - Improve design of new development: This policy states specific requirements for new developments, particularly in terms of enhancing the borough's identity and sense of place.

Policy DM1 – General development requirements: This policy sets out that all development proposals should be able to demonstrate that they are of high-quality design. They have to be compatible with surrounding land uses in terms of impact on surrounding land uses and the amenity of residents, particularly through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy. The policy requires any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light or odour to be suitably mitigated.

Policy SD1 – Delivering sustainable development: This policy states that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy T2 – Improving accessibility: This policy emphasises that new development should be within close proximity to public transport, backed by measures to reduce the need for travel and effective provision for cyclists, pedestrians and people with impaired mobility.

Unitary Development Plan 2001-2016 (2006)

G/d/2 – Green Belt: This policy states that the Green Belt should be protected from new development. Aligning with national planning policy and guidance, new development will only be permitted in very special circumstances.

NPPF

National policy is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021), and this is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance. Both are material to the consideration and determination of applications.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Section 8 of the NPPF, Promoting healthy and safe communities confirms that '*planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places*' (Paragraph 92).

Paragraph 95 states that:

'It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

(a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications...'

Appendix 2

Section 13 of the NPPF, Protecting Green Belt land, confirms

that ‘the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts’ and ‘the fundamental aim of Green

Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence’ (Paragraph 137).

Within a sub-section relating to ‘Proposals affecting the Green Belt’, the NPPF states that ‘Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances’ (Paragraph 147). It continues (Paragraph 148) to examine this and outlines the following:

‘When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.’

The key policy in this framework permitting the development is paragraph 149(c), which cites ‘the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building’ as an exception to the definition of inappropriate development.

Planning Practice Guidance

Green Belt: In assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, policy highlights that authorities must take into consideration the spatial and visual impacts of proposals. It also must consider the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

Healthy and Safe Communities: The guidance highlights that local authorities should allocate land for education (including extensions) to meet the projected demand for school places over the plan period.

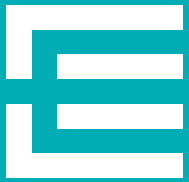
National Design Guide

The National Design Guide emphasises the importance of good design principles within development, in which designs should take into consideration the area’s context, local character, and built form. The guidance also particularly highlights (Policy M3) that all new development must have well-considered parking (aligning within Local Authority Parking Standards). Policy M1 emphasises that developments should instead prioritise access via public transport and active travel.

Places for Everyone

Places for Everyone is not yet adopted, being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 14 February 2022. However, it contains relevant information in relation to this application:

Policy JP-P 5: Education, Skills and Knowledge: This policy sets out that councils should enable the delivery of new and improved accessible facilities for all ages, such as early years, schools, further and higher education, and adult training to ensure the workforce is ready to benefit from new employment opportunities. This policy also aims to ensure the delivery of sufficient school places to respond to the demands from new housing.



EDEN

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