

Planning Statement

For OLF1 PROPCO2 S.A.R.L (C/O Oxenwood Real Estate LLP) | 23-340

Proposed erection of commercial/industrial building
Rhodes Business Park, Silburn Way, Middleton, Manchester, M24 4NE

Project: 23-340
Site Address: Rhodes Business Park, Silburn Way, Middleton, Manchester, M24 4NE
Client: OLF1 PROPCO2 S.A.R.L
Date: November 2023
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Approved by: Rawdon Gascoigne

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared in support of an application seeking full planning permission for the erection of a new 1,975sqm commercial/industrial unit (Use Classes B2/B8/E(g)) on land at Rhodes Business Park, Silburn Way, Middleton.
- 1.2 The site extends to 0.53 hectares and forms part of the wider Rhodes Business Park. Located on the park's southeastern edge, the site is previously developed land currently laid to hardstanding and has been used for open storage/parking and is largely vacant.
- 1.3 The proposed development would create job opportunities and support the economic growth of the Borough which is a local policy objective.
- 1.4 A suite of technical documents accompanies the application which establishes that the proposed development would not have any significant adverse effects on the environment and the proposed development is considered to comply with relevant development plan policy in relation to these matters. Full plans and a comprehensive Design and Access Statement are also provided which demonstrate how the proposed high quality, modern commercial/industrial unit could be accommodated within the site, complete with new access, appropriate turning, parking and landscaping. The proposed development would contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area and enhance the economic prospects of the area.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement demonstrates that the application proposal would support the economic growth of the area and comply with the development plan as a whole. We therefore consider that the application comprises sustainable development and should be approved.

2. The application

- 2.1 The application proposes the erection of a single commercial/industrial unit for flexible B2/B8/E(g) use. The site has been divided into two areas, one area comprising of the unit with service yard and associated car parking and a separate area containing an overflow car park with its own separate access which will be available for use by the wider Business Park.
- 2.2 The development will be accessed from the existing access road, Silburn Way, where all vehicles enter Rhodes Business Park via the existing Gatehouse and access control vehicle barriers. A new vehicular access into the site will be formed for the proposed unit with the existing access retained for the overflow parking area.



Figure 1: Proposed site plan

- 2.3 Service yards and level access doors are located on the East side of the site, closest to the access road and where all heavy goods vehicle movements will take place. It will be kept free from storage to allow safe circulation in and around the site and car parking. Pedestrian access will also be gained via the footpath that runs alongside the car park entrances to both car parking areas.



- 2.4 The unit will be constructed to provide an open plan warehouse facility with associated office spaces that include welfare facilities, for an occupier to fit out.
- 2.5 The building would provide 1,975sqm of floor space and measure 8m to the haunch and 11m to the ridge.
- 2.6 The car park for the unit would provide 19 spaces (including 2 DDA spaces and 6 EV spaces) together with 10 cycle spaces and 1 motorcycle space. The additional car parking area would provide a further 8 spaces, including 1 DDA space and 1 further motorcycle space.
- 2.7 The applicant is committed to achieving a BREEAM Very Good certification for the shell and core of the development. In addition to this a +15% CO² reduction on Part L requirements will be delivered, which include photovoltaic panels mounted on the roof of the building. Further details can be found in the Sustainability Statement and BREEAM pre-assessment produced by Hannan Associates and accompanying this application.
- 2.8 The design of the elevations has been carefully considered and utilises one cladding profile in two different colours. The darker cladding located at the base of the building and the lighter colour above the door line, thereby reducing the apparent height and mass of the building from the surrounding road and area at street level. The use of muted grey cladding panels, also reduces the visual impact of the building and the green details for the rainwater gutters and downpipes, helps to blend the building into the River Irk landscape behind.
- 2.9 The lighter grey vertical banding cladding has been used to highlight the office zone that runs along the elevation, this defines the internal spaces and serves to break up the elevations and create visual interest and character along Silburn Way.

3. Context

Site location and description

- 3.1 The site is located within the existing Rhodes Business Park approximately 1.5km from junction 19 of the M60. Vehicular and pedestrian access is provided via Silburn Way off Manchester Old Road (A576). The main access to the Business Park is secured via a gatehouse and vehicle barrier.
- 3.2 To the North, there is an existing cluster of mixed industrial units of larger scale but similar height to the proposed.
- 3.3 The application site lies on the periphery of the Primary Employment Zone as identified in the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006) (Policy EC/2) and forms the southern boundary of the Borough with Manchester City Council.



Figure 2: UDP Proposals map extract (site location indicated with a star)



- 3.4 There are existing residential properties to the north and west of the existing Business Park. To the south/southeast of the site is the River Irk with recreational land beyond. Broadman Brook SBI, Alkington Woods & Rhodes Lodes LNR and SBI, and Blackley Forest & Heaton Vale Reservoir LNR and SBI are located on the southern site boundary, approximately 35 m east and 1.4 km south-west of the site, respectively.
- 3.5 Currently laid to hardstanding the site appears to have been used for open storage/parking and is considered to constitute previously developed land.

Relevant planning history

- 3.6 A review of the LPA's online planning history mapping identifies that planning permission was granted on the site in June 2004 for erection of one industrial unit of a similar size and scale to the proposed development (application ref: 04/D43078). The officer's report for the application acknowledges that the development would play an important role in the regeneration of the existing employment area in full accord with UDP policies. There is no indication that the consent was implemented.

Background

- 3.7 The applicants acquired Rhodes Business Park in 2022. A multi-let logistics estate, the estate comprises nine urban logistics buildings and one office building, which total 192,127 sq ft and are fully let to six tenants.
- 3.8 With a national portfolio of logistics sites, the applicants are well placed to identify the need and demand for new storage, distribution and manufacturing space.
- 3.9 There have been extremely limited levels of development in recent years in the Manchester market resulting in a significant proportion of speculative new build development being pre-let. An example of this is the new build Broadheath Network Centre in Altrincham where Savills is joint letting agent. 60% of the scheme is pre-let or under offer prior to completion this coming November.
- 3.10 Record headline rentals continue to be set for both new build and existing accommodation, particularly in prime locations. This illustrates the high demand and low supply that has been evident in the north west for some time. Examples of a new unit scheme in the local area would be Urban Park, Rochdale, four units let in Q1 2023 with the majority to local SMEs showing that there is demand in the north of Manchester for storage, distribution and manufacturing in the area.



4. Policy context

Development plan context

4.1 The development plan for Rochdale comprises the Rochdale Core Strategy, adopted in 2016, and the saved policies of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in 2006. Relevant policies to the determination of this planning application include the following:

- Saved UDP Policy EC/2 - Primary Employment Zone
- Saved UDP Policy EM/7 – Development & Flood Risk
- Core Strategy Policy E2 - Increasing jobs and prosperity
- Core Strategy Policy P3 – Improving Design of New Development
- Core Strategy Policy DM1 – General Development Requirements
- Core Strategy Policy G1 - Tackling and adapting to climate change
- Core Strategy Policy G7 – Increasing the Value of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Strategy Policy G8 - Managing Water Resources & Flood Risk
- Core Strategy Policy G9 - Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

4.2 The Proposals Map for the Rochdale UDP identifies the site as falling within the Defined Urban Area of the Borough just outside the Primary Employment Zone.

4.3 The Proposals Map also indicates a Recreational Right of Way passing through the site (Policy RE/6) and the eastern end of the site as a Recreational Management Area (Policy RE/7(a)-(k)). However, having visited the site and studied aerial photography and Google maps it would appear that these are drafting errors on the map due to its small scale and that these recreational areas actually fall outside the site boundary. None of the site is publicly accessible being wholly within the secured compound of the existing Business Park. There are no public rights of way along the riverbank top to this side of the River Irk. As such, the Policy in relation to Recreational Management Areas is not relevant to and would be in no way prejudiced by this application.

National planning policy and guidance

4.4 The most recent version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in September 2023. At the heart of the 2023 Framework remains a presumption in favour of sustainable



development. As set out in paragraph 11 of the Framework, all proposals should be considered in the context of sustainable development.

4.5 Chapter 2 of the Framework seeks to clarify what is meant by sustainable development. In doing so it states that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are as follows:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation and improved productivity;
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
- an environmental role – including contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land and improving biodiversity.

4.6 Chapter 6 seeks to build a strong, competitive economy and highlights at paragraph 81 that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It identifies that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Other material considerations

Emerging Rochdale Site Allocations Plan (Part 2 Local Plan)

4.7 The Council has commenced preparation of a Part 2 Local Plan (Allocations Plan) further to the adopted Core Strategy. An initial consultation was carried out in 2018 on potential site allocations.

4.8 The emerging Allocations Plan itself is still at a very early stage and should attract only very limited, if any, weight.

Rochdale Employment Land Study (July 2008) and the Greater Manchester Employment Land Position Statement (August 2009)

4.9 These two studies considered how much employment land Rochdale needs to meet both local and Greater Manchester needs. Both studies considered that the Borough has one of the best employment land portfolios in the sub-region, and that the current supply is reasonably in balance with the size of the workforce and forecast demand, based on past take-up. However, both studies concluded there remains a need to provide a land supply for employment uses (primarily in use classes B1 to B8) of around 210 hectares in total for the period up to 2026.



Emerging Greater Manchester Places for Everyone (PfE)

- 4.10 The PfE will comprise a joint plan for the supply of housing and employment land across the Greater Manchester region, excluding Stockport, following the devolution of powers for strategic planning to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
- 4.11 At the time of writing, the emerging PfE is subject to consultation on the proposed Main Modifications recommended by the Inspectors (11 October 2023 - 6 December 2023). Whilst PfE does not include any specific allocations which relate to the application site it is supportive of economic development, growth and creation of job opportunities and moderate weight can be attached to the relevant economic policies within it in the determination of this planning application.



5. Planning considerations

Principle of Development

- 5.1 A key objective of national planning guidance is to deliver economic growth and prosperity through sustainable development. In order to achieve this in Rochdale it is important that there is sufficient land available of the right type, quality and in the right places.
- 5.2 The Rochdale Employment Land Study (July 2008) and the Greater Manchester Employment Land Position Statement (August 2009) identify a need for around 210 hectares of employment land for the period up to 2026 and the Core Strategy seeks to meet that requirement through allocated and windfall sites.
- 5.3 As set out above the site lies just outside the Primary Employment Zone as identified in the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006) and planning permission has previously been granted on the site for employment use of the same type and a very similar scale to that now proposed.
- 5.4 Policy E2 of the Core Strategy and its supporting text seeks to support the provision of a good supply of land and premises for employment uses, suitable for all types of businesses in accessible locations. It acknowledges this is essential to ensure the creation of more and better jobs and increase prosperity in the borough. The Policy states that the majority of employment growth will be targeted to the South of the Borough and at point (h), that it will support new employment development outside designated employment areas where it supports the above strategy and is not detrimental to amenity.
- 5.5 Having regard to the above it is considered that the application site, which constitutes previously developed land adjacent to an existing employment allocation and existing commercial/industrial development are ideally placed to support the Borough's economic, social and environmental aims.
- 5.6 The proposed development would deliver jobs and economic growth in a sustainable and accessible location and would be consistent with the UDP and Core Strategy support for employment uses in sustainable locations.
- 5.7 The principle of development on this site accords with national and local policies and should be supported. The economic benefits of the proposed development comprise an important material consideration and should attract substantial positive weight in determination of the application.

Design and amenity

- 5.8 Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy, General development requirements, sets out the basic planning considerations that apply to all development across the Borough and seeks to deliver high quality design compatible with surrounding land uses that does not adversely affect the amenity of residents or have adverse environmental impacts.
- 5.9 Building upon this Policy P3, Improving design of new development, highlights the importance of good design and considered that this will improve the image and attractiveness of the Borough as a place to live, work and visit, and can also improve health, safety and the environment.
- 5.10 The proposed building has been carefully designed having regard to the character and scale of the other structures within the existing business park and is considered to be of a high quality and entirely in keeping with the character of the wider site.
- 5.11 Consideration has been given to the proposed materials and colours of the building and as set out in the DAS the elevations utilise one cladding profile in two different colours. The darker cladding located at the base of the building and the lighter colour above the door line, thereby reducing the apparent height and mass of the building from the surrounding road and area at street level. The use of muted grey cladding panels, also reduces the visual impact of the building and the green details for the rainwater gutters and downpipes, helps to blend the building into the River Irk landscape behind.



- 5.12 There are no residential properties which would be impacted by the proposed development.
- 5.13 It is considered that the proposed building would satisfy the aims of policies DM1 and P3 and would provide an enhancement to the entrance to the business park as the site is currently laid to hardstanding, unmanaged and consists of external storage, which appears to have been untouched for a significant period of time, and includes a number of disused HGV trailers.



Technical and environmental considerations

5.14 The planning application is accompanied by reports assessing the following technical and environmental matters:

- Highways
- Ecology
- Noise
- Air quality
- Flood risk & drainage
- Ground conditions

Highways

5.15 The site lies approximately 1.5Km from junction 19 of the M60 and as such is well placed to access the national road network of storage and distribution purposes.

5.16 A Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan have been submitted in support of the application.

5.17 Parking has been provided in accordance with required standards and adequate HGV turning space is provided within the site. A tracking plan to demonstrate this is provided within the Transport Assessment.

5.18 The Transport Assessment demonstrates that the site is in an accessible location and that the development scheme would not result in a severe or detrimental impact on the local highway network, either in operational or highway safety terms. Indeed, it demonstrates that the impact on local highway network operation would be negligible and as such there are no overriding reasons for refusing the planning application on highways and transportation grounds.

Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Trees

5.19 Core Strategy Policy G7 - Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity, seeks to maximise opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and states that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity. In this instance the site is currently laid to hard standing with negligible ecological interest. The application proposals include a detailed landscaping scheme and have been subject to a BNG calculation which demonstrated the proposals would deliver 22.60% gain in habitat units and 0.22 hedgerow units have been created.



- 5.20 It is noted in the EcIA that accompanies the application that Broadman Brook SBI, Alkington Woods & Rhodes Lodes LNR and SBI, and Blackley Forest & Heaton Vale Reservoir LNR and SBI are located on the southern site boundary. These designated sites are located in close proximity to the site or are connected to the site by the River Irk. As such, standard best practice pollution prevention is expected to be incorporated into a CEMP, to ensure any impacts to the designated sites will be avoided.
- 5.21 Whilst there are a number of trees within and adjacent to the site these are largely self-seeded and arboricultural and ecological assessment by Tyler Grange has identified them to be of limited quality and with Negligible bat roosting potential, and as such no further surveys with regards to roosting bats will be required prior to the removal of any trees.
- 5.22 A proposed soft-landscaping scheme has been prepared and accompanies the application. The proposal includes new tree planting at the boundaries of the site and internally within the new proposed parking area to the north eastern extents of the site. Twenty-six new trees have been proposed, in addition to extensive native shrub and hedge planting at the site. Despite the proposed tree losses, it is anticipated that a net-gain in tree canopy will be achieved in the long-term. Moreover, RMBC operates a “2-1” replacement planting policy for new developments. Given the current proposals necessitate the removal of 13no. trees, a minimum of 26no. trees are required to meet this ratio, which the soft proposed soft landscaping scheme has detailed.
- 5.23 Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam are present in the west of the site and on the southern site boundary. These invasive species are subject to ongoing treatment by a specialist invasive species contractor.
- 5.24 Having regard to the proximity of the River Irk, which offers opportunities as a wildlife corridor, it is recommended that a dark corridor be provided along the southern boundary of the site. Within this area lighting will be under 5 lux. A proposed lighting plan accompanies the application.
- 5.25 Given the proximity of the site to the River Irk a survey for Otters was undertaken and identified no signs of holts or presence in the area. It is recommended that a CEMP be required to detail Precautionary Working Methods for badger, hedgehog, otter and kingfisher. This can be secured by way of standard planning condition.
- 5.26 Having regard to the ecological assessments which have been undertaken and the low baseline value of the site for ecology and biodiversity, the proposed development is not considered to have any negative effects on wildlife or trees and indeed offers significant opportunities for enhancement to biodiversity. As such the proposals accord with the aims of Policy G7 of the Core Strategy as well as the environmental aims of the Framework and Environment Act.



Noise

- 5.27 A Noise assessment has been undertaken by Hepworth Acoustics. The assessment has included a site visit and inspection of the site and the surrounding area and a noise survey over a 24-hour period in order to quantify the representative background noise climate of the area.
- 5.28 The results of the noise survey have been used as a basis for determining appropriate noise limits for the development. The need to ensure that the development does not result in any unacceptable noise impact can be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition requiring all noise from the site combined to be controlled to within the recommended noise limits.
- 5.29 Outline calculations have indicated that it should be straight-forward to control noise from the development to within the relevant noise limits.

Air quality

- 5.30 One of the key themes of the Core Strategy is a desire to ensure development is not detrimental to the environment of the Borough, this includes in relation to air quality.
- 5.31 Core Strategy Policy G9 - Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability, seeks to where possible reduce air pollution and requires that development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in pollution, including air pollution.
- 5.32 The site does not lie within an Air Quality Management Zone. However, an Air Quality Assessment has been undertaken by Redmore Environmental which demonstrates that, at both construction and operational phases, the development is not likely to give rise to any significant air quality impacts.
- 5.33 Based on the assessment results, air quality factors are not considered a constraint to planning consent for the development.

Flood risk & drainage

- 5.34 A review of the EA Flood Maps shows that the site is located within Flood Zone 3. It is to be noted that the EA flood maps show flood defences along the north bank of the River Irk close to the western boundary of the development site.
- 5.35 Saved UDP Policy EM/7 – Development & Flood Risk Core Strategy, Core Strategy Policy G8 - Managing Water Resources & Flood Risk and Core Strategy Policy G9 - Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability all seek to manage and minimise flood risk from development.



- 5.36 A detailed Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken by Burrows Graham and an appropriate drainage strategy has been prepared.
- 5.37 The proposed site use is defined as 'less vulnerable' such that the development can be considered 'appropriate' in accordance with Framework guidelines. As the site is located within Flood Zone 3, the sequential and exception tests may be required by the local authority. In this respect however it should be noted that the site comprises previously developed land effectively within an existing employment area and the proposal would seek to build in the existing accessibility of this site, rather than establishing the same development where it does not exist at present. Further to this, the site is considered to be at 'low-medium risk' from all other sources of flooding; tidal, fluvial, pluvial, sewer, groundwater and artificial sources.
- 5.38 The surface water drainage strategy, as outlined in the supporting FRA and Drainage Strategy, is to restrict the proposed outflow rate to satisfy both Greater Manchester Area & the Rochdale SFRA and to ensure that the flood risk to the site and surrounding catchment is not increased by the proposed development.
- 5.39 The Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) hierarchy has been considered and surface water runoff will be collected from the impermeable areas and directed via an underground network to a geocellular attenuation tank located beneath the main service yard area before connecting to the existing surface water sewer via an existing connection, within the development site, at a restricted rate of 4.5l/s (QBAR). This overall approach aligns with the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) policy and provides a significant reduction in the pre-development unrestricted discharge rates. A detailed Drainage layout with hydraulic calculations incorporating a climate change allowance of 40% have been prepared to support this approach.
- 5.40 The Assessment concludes there is no residual flood risk from the development site to the surrounding area due to the reduction in storm water flow rates. The development does not therefore increase the risk of flooding to other adjacent neighbourhoods.
- 5.41 Foul flows will be collected by a new gravity network to the existing spur serving the development plot. The private network discharges into the public sewer, located north of the industrial development along the A576, via a rising main.
- 5.42 Having regard to the detailed assessment undertaken in regard to flood risk and drainage it is considered that the proposed development complies with the requirements and aims of the relevant policies of the UDP and Core Strategy as well as the objective of the Framework and would not result in any adverse impacts in regard to flood risk or drainage and that the site is suitable for the development proposed.



Ground conditions

- 5.43 A Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) of the site has been undertaken by Soiltechnics and accompanies this application. This report includes at Appendix C a Coal Mining report as the site is located within a Coal Mining Reporting Area, but outside of a Development High Risk Area.
- 5.44 The PRA identifies that from the mid-1800s the site was recorded as part of the Calico Print Works and Union Cotton Mills which extend beyond the northern and western boundary of the site. Filter beds, a disposal pit and tanks were present on site until the 1950s when the site was left undeveloped. In the late 1990s hardstanding and soft landscaping similar to the present day configuration was present across the site.
- 5.45 The coal mining report indicates no record of historic shallow mining beneath the site, and there is no evidence to suggest unrecorded probable workings could be present. There are no records of opencast mining, coal mining subsidence or mine gas within 50m of the site, and no mine entries recorded within 100m of the site. As such, the site is not considered to be at a significant instability or subsidence risk from the historical coal mining legacy in the area.
- 5.46 In summary, the PRA has not highlighted any potential contaminant linkages which could pose a significant possibility of significant harm under the current land use. In terms of the proposed development scheme, a minimal risk approach applies having regard to the industrial heritage of the site and potential for Made Ground deposits. As such, a Phase 2 assessment is recommended. This is currently in preparation and will be submitted to the LPA upon receipt.
- 5.47 Having regard to the conclusions of the PRA and, appreciating that the phase 2 assessment may result in risk management recommendations which can be dealt with by way of standard planning conditions, it is considered that the proposed development would comply with the aims of Core Strategy Policy G9 - Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability, and would not adversely effect the health of workers on the site or the local environment.



6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This planning application seeks full permission for erection of a new 1,975sqm commercial/industrial unit (Use Classes E(g)/B2/B8) on land at Rhodes Business Park, Silburn Way, Middleton. The application site extends to 0.53 hectares and is previously developed land on the southeastern edge of an existing Business Park. The site is currently laid to hardstanding and has previously been used for open storage/parking and is largely vacant.
- 6.2 A suite of technical documents accompanies the application and demonstrates that the proposed development would not have any significant adverse effects on the environment and would in fact deliver significant economic benefits and Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 6.3 The proposed development is considered to comply with relevant development plan policy in relation to these matters.
- 6.4 Full plans and a comprehensive Design and Access Statement are also provided which demonstrate how the proposed high quality, modern commercial/industrial unit could be accommodated within the site, complete with new access, appropriate turning, parking and landscaping. The proposed development would contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area and enhance the economic activity of the area.
- 6.5 We therefore consider that the application comprises sustainable development and should be approved.

