Design and Access Statement including Heritage Statement

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings and application forms.

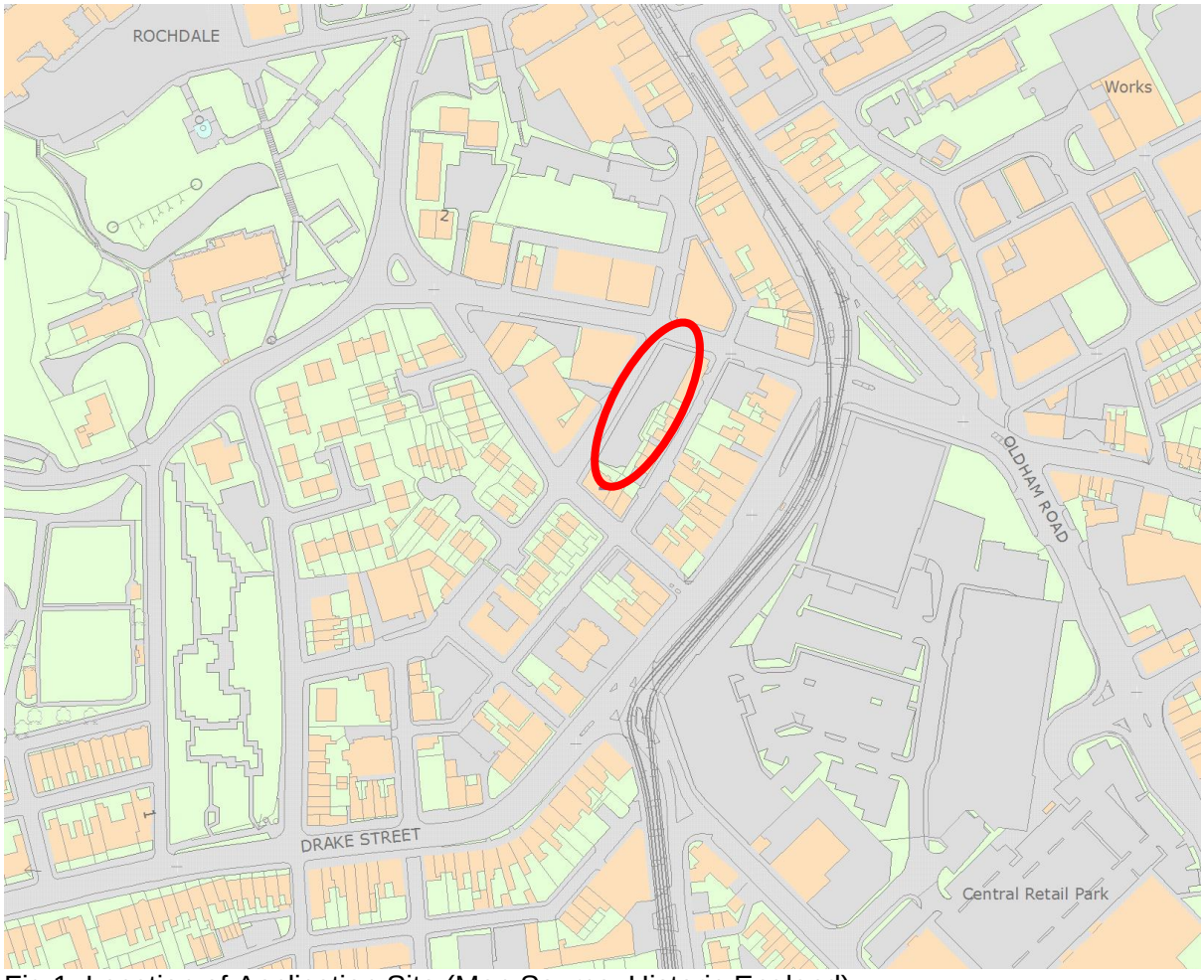

Fig 1. Location of Application Site (Map Source: Historic England)

Request

It is requested that should the application be refused, then the agent should be advised prior to notification. Should any of the proposal required amending, the planning Officer should consult the agent prior to final report being issued. The applicant may wish to request the application to be reviewed by committee should the officers look to refuse, therefore, the application may be called in by the local councillor.



Fig 2. Existing Vehicular Site Entrances 1 & 2

The application site is mainly flat, has two entrances both from Great George Street with parking bays provided over most of the site with a hand car wash located to the far northern corner of the site. To serve the car wash a canopy and what appear to be two metal containers have been positioned to provide a valet area and needed office space. The site is bound by 2m high palisade fencing along the Great George Street frontage and along the northern elevation of School Lane whilst a 3m (approx.) high solid timer fence is located on the eastern boundary.



Fig 3. Current Use of Site as Car Wash (Photo Source: Google Street View)

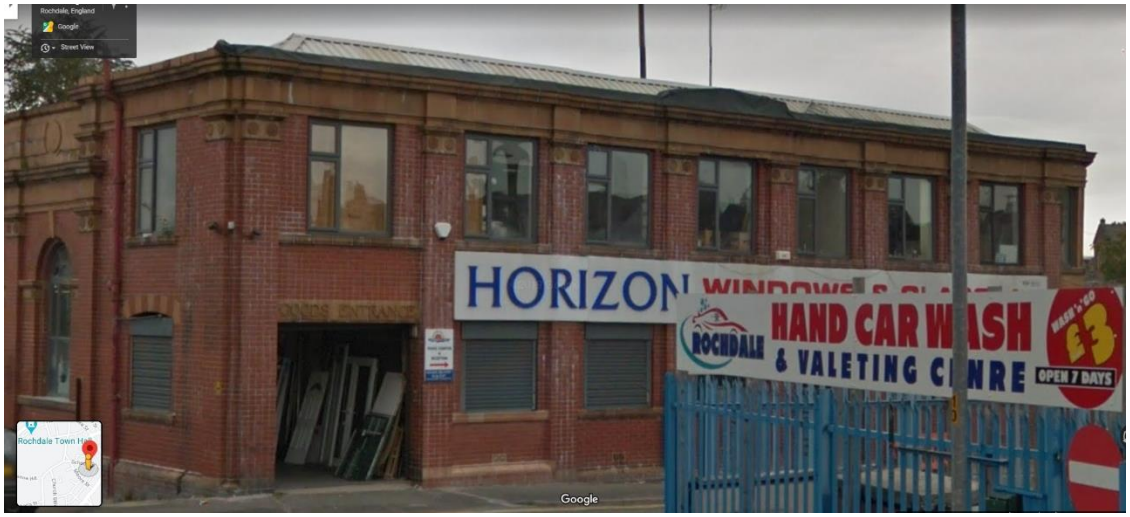

Fig 4. Two storey red brick building opposite site with metal sheet roofing (source: Google)



Fig 5. 2 storey red brick motor-industry related building use near application (source: Google)

The site is located in an area which is mainly commercial in nature predominantly associated with the automotive industry although there are also some residential properties nearby. To the south of the property is the Grade II Listed Congregational Church with the Rochdale Observer building located to the north across School Street. The site is also located within the Town Centre Conservation Area. Located to the east of the site are two storey residential dwellings whilst o the west are large commercial buildings.

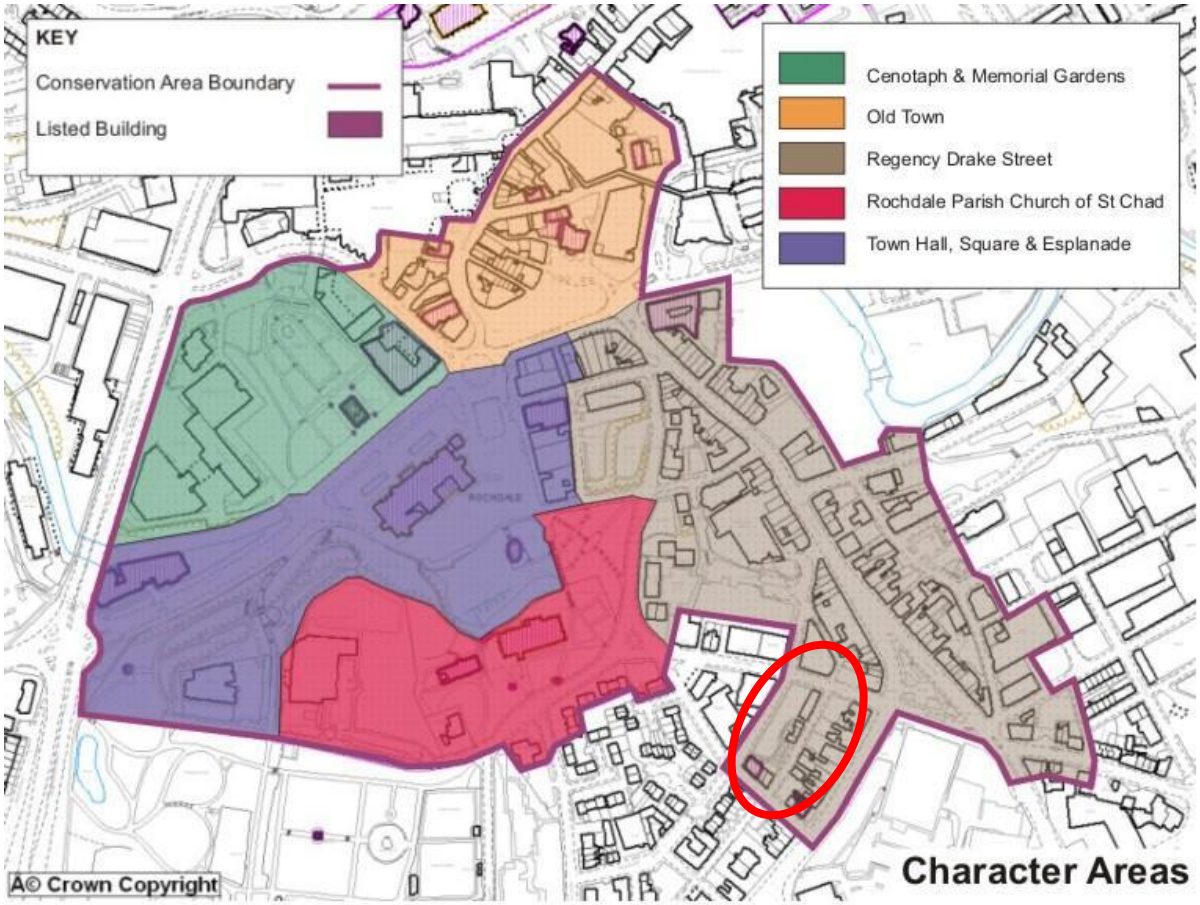

Fig 6. Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area – Character Areas
(source: Rochdale Council Publication)



Fig 7. Grade II Listed Congregational Church

Source: Google Street View



Fig 8. Immediate vicinity around site appears to include one listed building

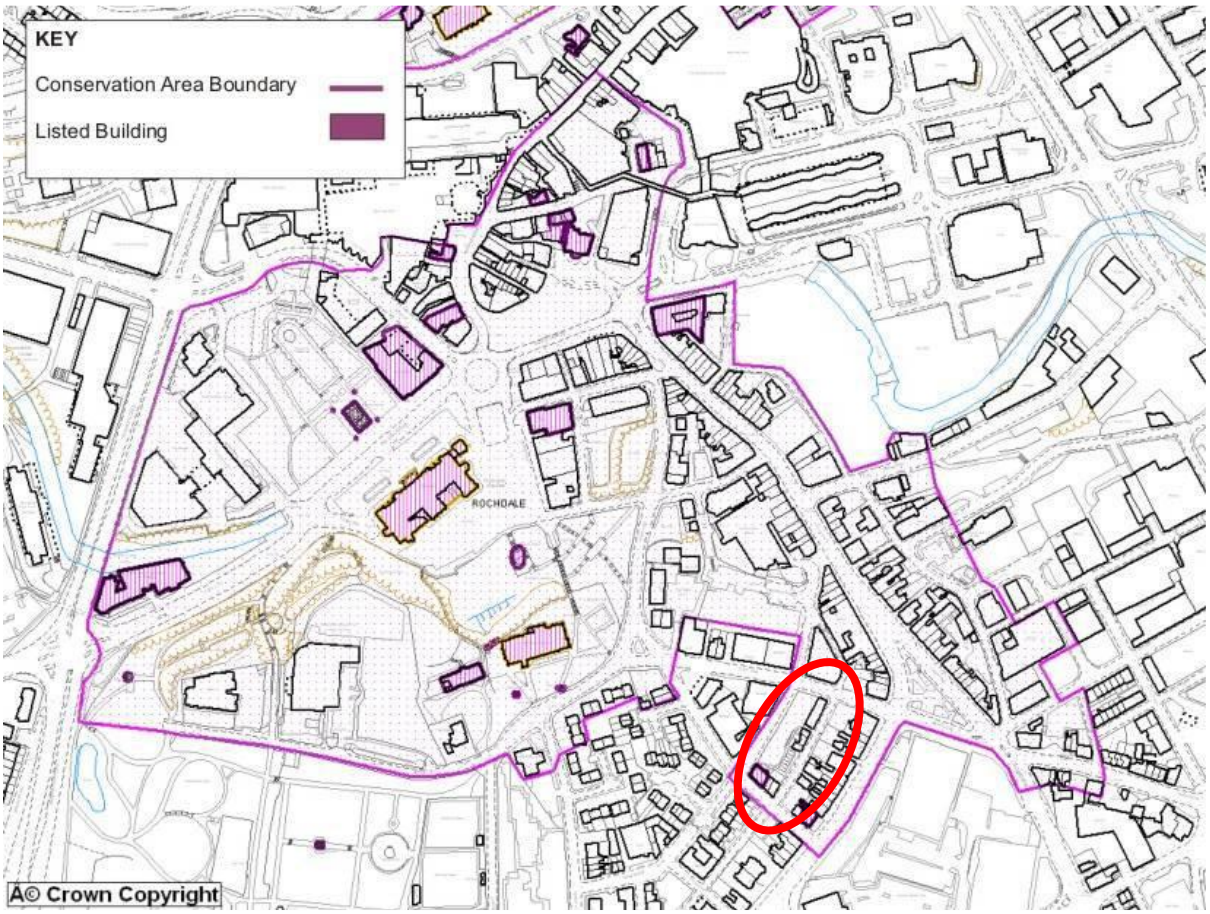

Fig 9. Conservation Area Boundary showing individual Listed Buildings (source: Rochdale Council publication)

Proposal

The company who wish to trade from Unit A are well established with Rochdale, currently operating from an adjacent site in school lane as RT Autos, having a wide client base. They are having to re-locate due to the owner of their current building wishing to re-develop, leading to the existing lease being removed.

Parking is provided for 5 cars outside with additional spaces within the garage workshop. The application proposes to remove the existing car wash at the site and erect three units. Unit A as shown on the plan would be used as a MOT Testing Station for class 4 and 7 vehicles, whilst units B and C would be let out for general storage use.

The plans show unit A would be accessed via an existing entrance/access whilst a new access would be created that would lead to a small parking area for five vehicles. The second existing access would provide the entrance to storage units B and C and to four car parking spaces.

The proposals are for new purpose-built units on the existing car wash site. The largest of these units, Unit A is to be used as an accredited VOSA MOT testing station for Class 4 & Class 7 vehicles. The proposed use would provide a MOT Station and separate storage / distribution units which would provide jobs for local residents. The surrounding area is of mixed use with similar storage MOT businesses in the vicinity.

Opening times for the units will be 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 5pm Saturdays and closed on Sundays and bank Holidays. Unit A will provide 3 employees and 1 trainee at any given time. Waste disposal would be for sump oils which are disposed of into a contained drum and taken off site to an accredited disposal centre.

The nearest residential dwellings are located on Back Drake Street to the east and Moore Street to the south, these properties are semi-detached and two stories in height and have their rear elevations facing the proposed site.

In terms of the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers, the MOT Station would be positioned to the northern end of the site adjacent to an existing industrial unit (Digital Printing) and surrounded by mainly commercial buildings, as such the positioning of unit A is not considered to significantly harm the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Design, character and appearance

Policy P2 of the adopted Core Strategy states that the Council will protect the Borough's heritage by conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Saved UDP Policy BE/17 only permits development that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Policy P3 of the adopted Core Strategy requires all new developments, regardless of location in the borough, to adhere to high standards of design. Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy states that all development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they are of high-quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area, in addition to requiring a number of other basic planning considerations.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building. A similar requirement for the preservation and enhancement of character of a conservation area is found in Section 72 of the Act.

The applicant and agents are both keen to work closely with the Council's Planning and Conservation Officers in amending the proposals as required in terms of their overall design, character, appearance & materials to seek appropriate approval.

The NPPF at Paragraph 192 advises that when determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The site is currently used as car parking and a car wash and is surrounded by painted palisade fencing. Historically, the site was occupied by residential properties however these were all demolished. The site is located within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area along with being in the setting of the Congregational Church (Grade II listed building) and the Rochdale Observer Printworks.

At present it is considered that the site does not make a positive contribution to the conservation area and there is therefore scope for improvement which could be achieved through high quality development. Any development within the conservation area must preserve and enhance its special character.

In view of this the new development proposed within the site is aimed at being subservient in terms of scale and massing to the adjacent heritage assets and shall be constructed of high quality, traditional materials to be supported by the Council. The Councils Conservation Officer has been consulted in terms of the preferred traditional to retain the character of the property.

Highways, Parking and Accessibility

Policy T2 of the Core Strategy acknowledges that development that offers greater access for all forms of travel will assist the borough's continuous improvement to becoming more sustainable, healthier, greener and prosperous. Development and infrastructure proposal are required to satisfy the Council's accessibility hierarchy and, in all circumstances, the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area will have priority, while providing reliable journey times for those travelling through.

Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. The Councils highways officer has been consulted on the plans proposed and is satisfied a MOT station will not generate a great volume of traffic.

MOTs will be undertaken on an appointment basis so it is unlikely that they will spill on the highway and monopolise on street parking places. As requested, we confirm the existing car wash business will no longer remain on the site as part of these proposals. Sight lines have been taken into account on the proposed plans to indicate the safe egress of vehicles from the site, however traffic movement from site will be limited.

Conclusion

The locality comprises a mix of residential and commercial uses, although the proposed uses and buildings would be acceptable in terms of Noise pollution and highways safety, any concerns relating to the design of the buildings being within a Conservation Area and adjacent to Listed Buildings, can be addressed as required by close liaison between the Applicant, Agent and Local Authority. Given that there would be minimal changes required to the building and the parking area, and that this proposal would generate employment and trade for this are of Rochdale, we feel that this application should be supported.

Appendices



Fig 10. Motor industry related building use near site (source: Google)



Fig 11. Two storey red brick building opposite site used for light industry, manufacture & storage (source: Google)



Fig 12. Motor industry related building use near site (source: Google)



Fig 13. Motor industry related building use near site (source: Google)

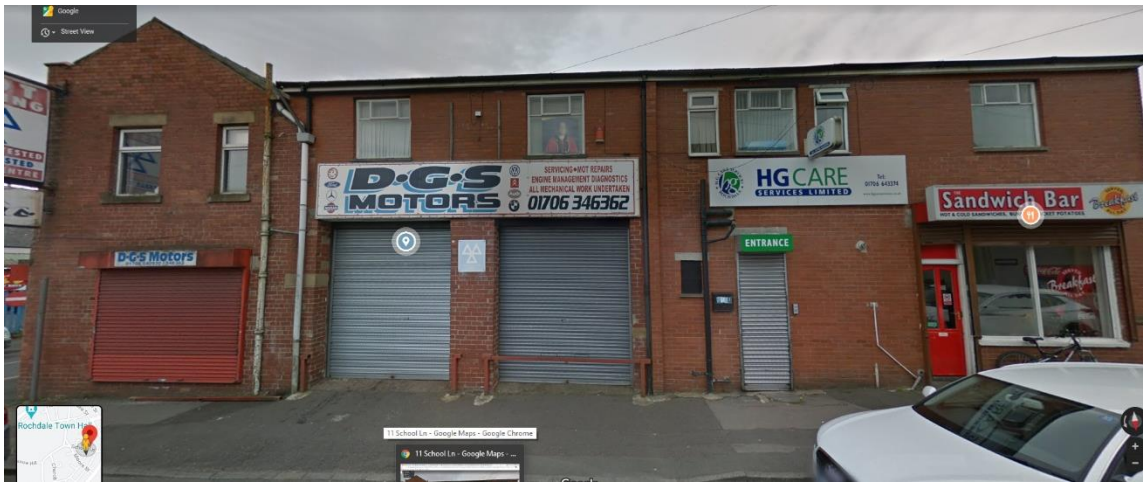

Fig 14. Motor industry related building use near site (source: Google)