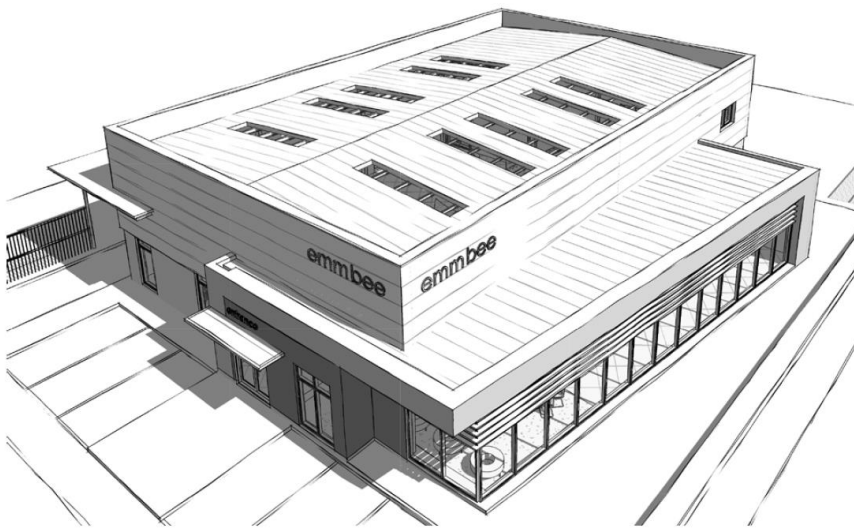


Design and Planning Statement

Land to the east of Smethurst Street, Heywood
November 2022



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Introduction

Chadkirk Consulting Ltd has been instructed by EmmBee Motorhomes to submit a full planning application for the proposed use of the application site for additional car parking associated with the approved EmmBee Motor Homes development. The development site is located on vacant land east of Smethurst Street, Heywood. The land is now within EmmBee's ownership following the purchase of the site completing last month.

Background

An extant planning permission relates to land to the west of George Street, application reference 18/00971/FUL dated 24th June 2019, for the erection of a motorhome sales centre and showroom and a detached storage unit (Sui Generis) together with the creation of two accesses off George Street including associated hardstanding to facilitate forecourt/display areas. All pre-commencement conditions relating to this permission have been discharged and a material start on site has been made and acknowledged by the LPA in June this year.

EmmBee Motorhomes is a local family run business currently based at Prettywood, Bury, Greater Manchester, BL9 7HZ. They have been trading in the Heywood area for over 33 years. The business has grown significantly over recent years and their aim is to expand their facilities operating from both sites to cope with the demands of the business.

This Design and Planning Statement will discuss increasing the size of the overall site to include an additional parcel of land to the west of the site for additional staff parking and planting. This application forms the second application of its type relating to the additional land following the refusal of the initial application in April of this year (reference 22-00079-FUL). This application seeks to address the reasons for refusal and follows consultation with the Planning Officer and local residents.

The site subject to this planning application can be seen coloured yellow in Figure 1. The extant planning permission confirms that the proposals accord with the Core Strategy Policies and therefore this small extension should also be considered favourably.

Location and Existing Surroundings

The approved site is currently vacant and accessed from George Street. It is surrounded by commercial and industrial premises to the east and south located off Britannia Street and Leigh Street. Residential properties are located to the west along Smethurst Street and Sunset Hill. A green field is located to the north.

Access to the site will be through the approved development from George Street so no additional vehicle movements will be created on Smethurst Street.

The additional parcel is located to the west of the site between the existing approved development and east of Smethurst Street. The area is currently vacant, unmanaged, and overgrown with vegetation, scrubland, and trees. Littering and fly tipping is an issue in the area. Effectively in-fill development, the proposal for development within the overall EmmBee Motorhomes site will form a new boundary treatment to the site, creating a secure and improved green boundary for both residents and the new business.



Figure 1. Site Location Plan

Exiting Site Photographs

Photographs of the existing site can be seen below.



Photographs taken from Smethurst Street towards the proposal site



Photographs taken from Smethurst Street towards the proposal site



Photograph taken from George Street to approved site; from Britannia Street to approved site

Planning History

A full planning application to convert the whole of the application site into a parking area was refused earlier this year for the following reasons.

Reasons:

1 The proposed development, by reason of its design, would relate poorly to the character of Smethurst Street and as a consequence of the siting and design of boundary treatments, which would present a hard edge to the highway in addition to contributing significantly to a tunnelling impact along Smethurst Street. The substantial loss of vegetation, and impact on views into and across the site would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the street scene, and would be unduly harmful in this regard. The proposals would therefore fail to accord with Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2 The development proposals would clear a substantial quantum of vegetation from the site, and does not take sufficient measures to minimise its impact to local biodiversity and would not provide net gains for biodiversity at the site. The proposed development would fail to accord with paragraph 174d. of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies G6 and G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy.

3 The proposed development, by reason of its proposed use as a staff car park, would result in intense periods of comings and goings; car doors shutting, engine ignitions and vehicle movements within close proximity to residential dwellings on Smethurst Street, resulting in unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance the existing and future occupiers of these dwellings. The application is therefore contrary to the relevant parts of policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

This application seeks to address each of the reasons for refusal. The key changes to the scheme (from the previous application) are as follows;

1. The area covered with parking has been reduced
2. A large group of trees from G3 are now retained
3. The fencing type has been altered to offer a better outlook for residents
4. The landscape buffer to the parking area has been increased

Reason 1

Further to consultation with neighbours on Smethurst Street the site and the planning department the location and type of fencing has been amended. The fence has been set back further into the site by the parking bays to allow for an enhanced buffer of shrub and tree planting. The fence type now proposed is mesh and will blend into the existing and proposed vegetation to provide the

residents of Smethurst Street with a green outlook. The open mesh fencing in conjunction with the additional planting will prevent any tunnelling effect from being created along the street. There is no longer a 'substantial' loss of vegetation from the site because of the retention of trees in the southern part of the site.

Reason 2

The site layout has been amended to reduce the hard standing proposed and a large area of existing trees is to be retained. In addition to this buffer planting is proposed along the development boundary to screen and enhance the view of the development site. An ecologist has reviewed the proposals and has calculated the biodiversity net gain for the development site. The calculations are attached to this application. Through the amended design and tree planting the site has a 15% increase in BNG.

Reason 3

Consultation between EmmBee and residents of Smethurst Street have resulted in an increased understanding of how this parking area will be used. The buffer between Smethurst Street and the parking area has been increased to provide more distance and screening between the two uses. There is also a reduction in the number of parking spaces and because they will only be accessed during the core working hours of 9am to 5pm it is very unlikely any harm or disturbance will be caused to nearby residents. The working hours are not unsociable times and therefore this listed reason for refusal is no longer a reason for concern. The application site sits within an area of mixed uses including residential, commercial and industrial and therefore this small extension to the parking provision is in-keeping with the surroundings.

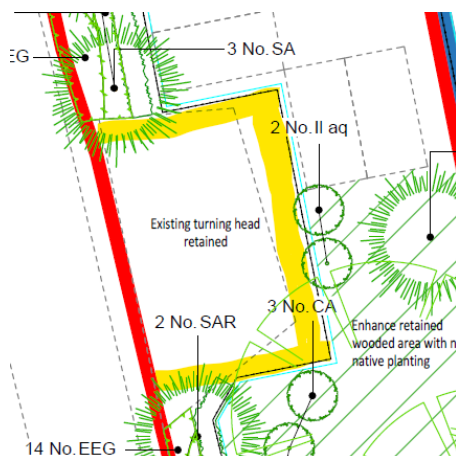
The following sections detail the consultation that has taken place which has informed the design team of the changes required to address the areas for concern. The revised design is then explained in detail.

Public Consultation

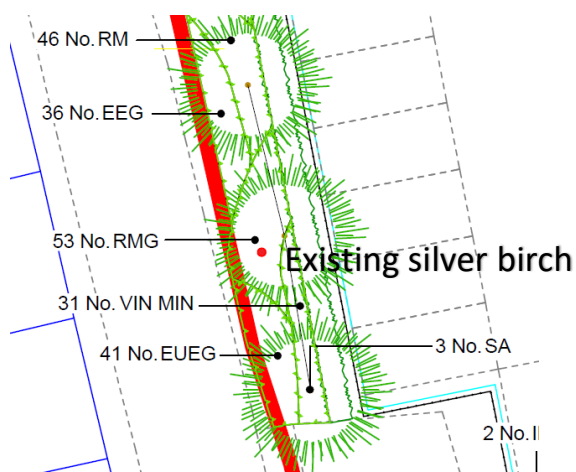
The application site is directly faced by residents on Smethurst Street. The following affected properties have been contacted via a public consultation letter to open a discussion regarding EmmBee's proposals:

- 17 Smethurst Street, Heywood OL10 4QB
- 15 Smethurst Street, Heywood OL10 4QB
- 13 Smethurst Street, Heywood OL10 4QB
- 11 Smethurst Street, Heywood OL10 4QB
- 9 Smethurst Street, Heywood OL10 4QB
- Initial Kitchens 118-120 Bridge Street OL10 1JG
- Peel Graphics 104-106 Bridge Street OL10 1JG
- Heywood Veterinary Centre 100 Bridge Street OL10 1JG

A number of residents have spoken with the applicants directly and a meeting was held at EmmBee, Prettywood on the 19th October. Comments from residents were considered and a number of changes were made to the scheme.



The area used by residents for turning and parking, whilst owned by Emm Bee and within the red edge for this development will be made available for continued use by residents.



EmmBee will endeavour to retain the existing silver birch (marked by the red dot). This has been highlighted as an important tree by one neighbour and if possible, it will be retained in the landscape buffer.

Proposed Development

Site Access

The site access is already approved under planning permission 18/00971/FUL. Access to the overall site is directly off George Street, which is a quiet side road off Bridge Street. The low number of vehicle movements into this site will have minimal impact on the existing highways network. The site proposes two access points off George Street. The first (1) will be the main customer and staff entrance feeding the staff and customer car parks. The second (2), an existing site entrance, will be enhanced to provide a service access. This will be used for moving stock on and off site to avoid clashes with the main customer car park.

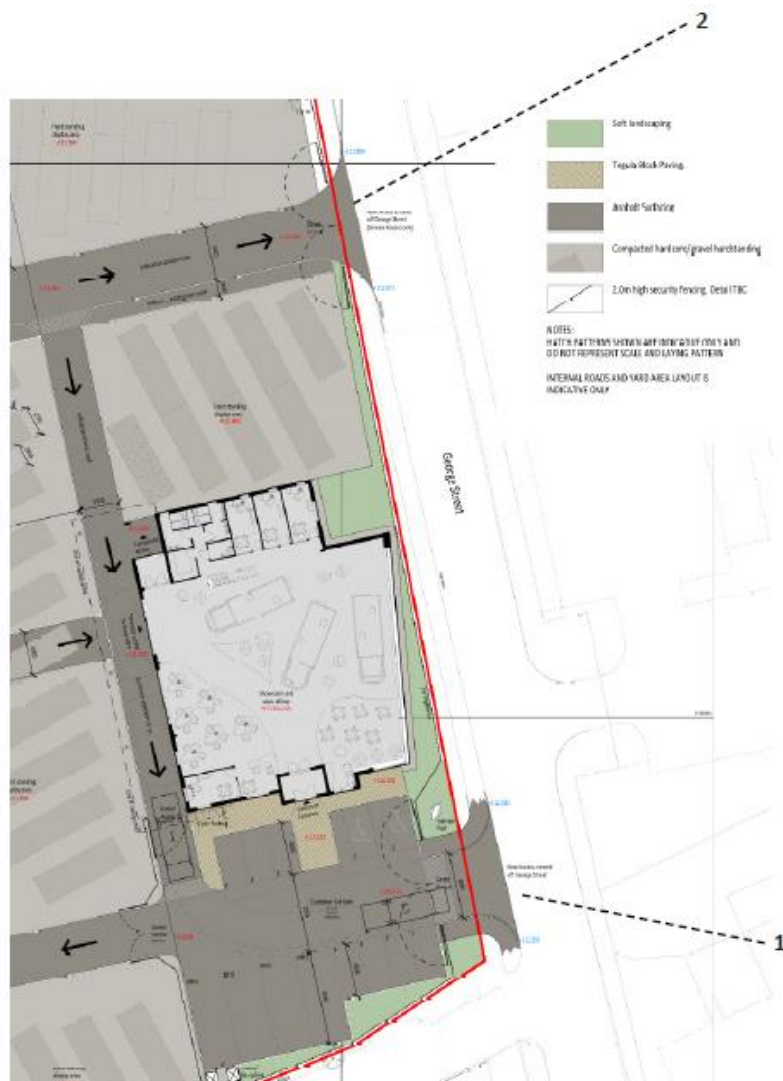


Figure 2. Extract from approved site plan showing access points 1 and 2 from George Street

Site Layout Design



Figure 3. Proposed Site plan – area to the north to accommodate car parking and the area to the south to retain existing tree cover

Proposed Landscaping Design

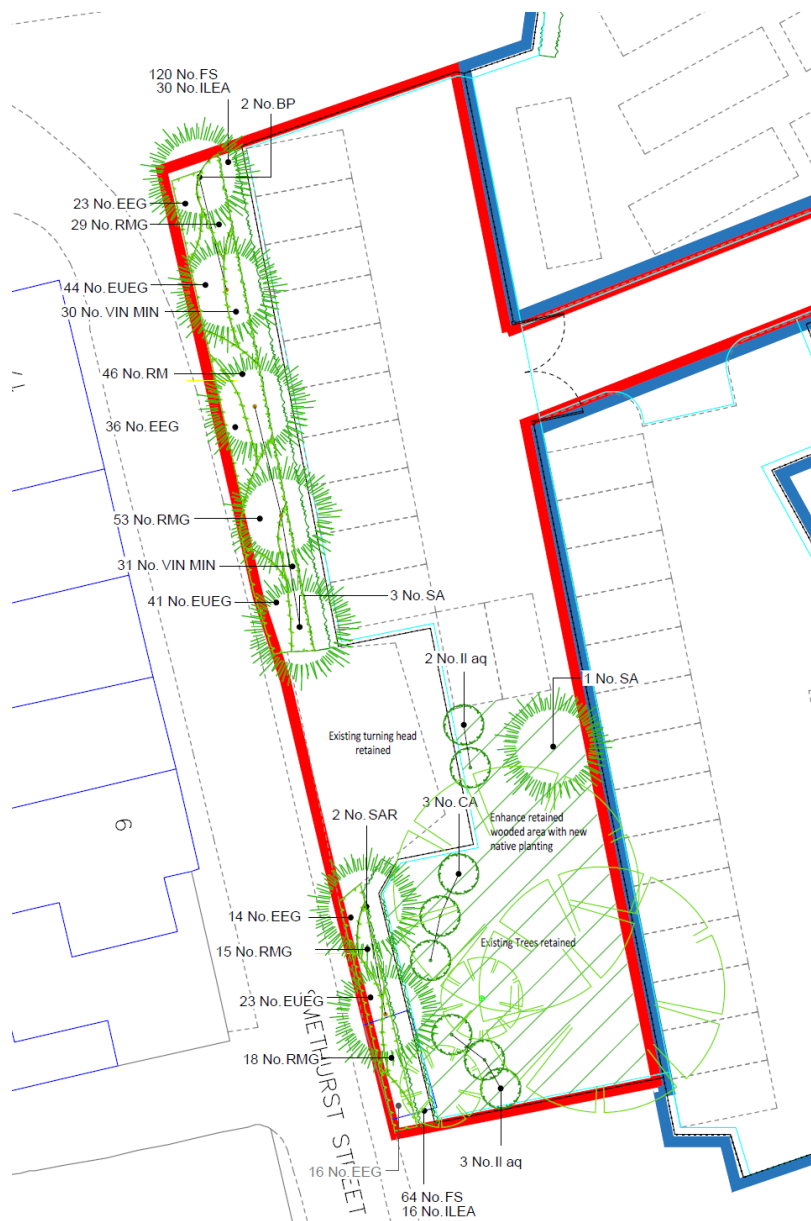


Figure 4. Landscape Proposals

The proposals for the additional land parcel involve a small extension to hard standing from the original approval to create additional area for overflow and staff car parking.

A small area of scrub vegetation and a few low-quality trees will require removal to facilitate the parking area but the group of trees to the south will be retained and enhanced. A new mesh fence will be constructed along the site boundary to secure the site and well considered planting will be provided to tidy up this area and make the outlook for residents much more pleasant.

Technical Report Review

Contaminated Land

E3P Ltd has been commissioned to undertake a Phase I Geo-environmental Site Assessment 13-224-R1-1 at the site. The report was required to determine potential contaminated land liabilities and geotechnical constraints as part of the proposed site redevelopment.

The following contamination sources have been identified onsite: Made Ground associated with infilling of cutting and reservoir.

Potential contaminants include heavy metals, PAH, TPH, and asbestos. The risk to futures users of the site is considered to be low on the basis that the subject site will be utilised as a hardstanding car park and amenity area containing the retained trees.

Geotechnical Assessment

No significant issues have been identified for this sector of the development.

Ecological Appraisal

The vegetation on site has low ecological value. There is no evidence that protected species regularly occur on the site and it is not thought that any species would be negatively impacted by the proposed development.

There is no evidence of Japanese Knotweed present within the application site boundary.

Drainage Proposals

The surface water in this area will be collected below the parking area and discharged to the public sewer in a controlled manner using a Hydrobrake.

Planning Justification

This application seeks to make use of a small, undeveloped parcel of land as part of the wider EmmBee development to deliver the comprehensive regeneration of this area of Heywood.

The small site lies adjacent to the development site of the new EmmBee Motor Homes sales centre. It is currently an unmanaged site and has a poor appearance as a result of being subject to fly-tipping.

The application proposal will bring the problem site into the wider EmmBee redevelopment site to provide additional and overflow staff parking area.

The site lies within the urban area of Heywood as shown on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. The committee report for the wider EmmBee proposal (under application ref. 18/00971/FUL) stated the following regarding the site's sustainable location and contribution to the local economy:

The site is located within 90 metres of Heywood Town Centre, which is a stopping point of multiple bus routes through the borough. Due to its proximity, it would also have the potential for providing economic support to Town Centre businesses. By virtue of the sustainable location of the site it is considered that the development would accord with paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy.

Furthermore, the wider site proposal has already been considered to accord with Core Strategy Policies E2 and E4 under application 18/00971/FUL. This small additional area of parking will enable the site to provide an additional 12 car parking spaces for staff for EmmBee's peak sales and operating period and future proofing for future growth of the business and therefore accords with Core Policy E2 in supporting small scale employment development and job creation/retention.

The proposal has been designed with the residential of Smethurst Street in mind and proposes a mesh fence with a heavily planted landscaping buffer creating an improved visual outlook from properties on Smethurst Street from the existing situation to accord with Policy E4, P3 and DM1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

The approved fencing boundary to the approved EmmBee site will remain to provide a secure boundary to the EmmBee business, with a gated access to the staff parking area to be opened for use during normal business hours only. In this way the proposal balances residential amenity and the wider security needs of the business.

Conclusion

- This planning application is for a small extension to a parking area already approved for use as a motorhome sales area and showroom.
- The land is currently owned by EmmBee and is vacant. It is subject to littering, with low quality trees and brambles covering the ground. This application will remove this unsightly area and will provide a secure and well considered planting scheme to enhance the outlook for residents.
- EmmBee are a successful local family business with a proven track record of operating within Rochdale. This additional overflow and staff parking will enable the company to expand and meet the current demands of their customers.
- Additional jobs will be created.
- The scheme accords with the Core Development policies as proven by the planning permission for the main showhome site.
- The proposed scheme has been amended to address the reasons for refusal to the application made earlier this year and to respond to comments made by neighbours to the site.
- Public engagement has allowed a scheme to come forward that balances the needs of all key stakeholders.

We trust this application can now be supported.