

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Redevelopment of Land (SUI GENERIS) at Corporation Road, Oldham OL11 4JB for the Erection of TWO Industrial Storage Units (Use Class B2/B8)

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompanies a full planning application for the redevelopment of a 1,073m² brownfield site located on the western flank of Corporation Road in Rochdale (postcode OL11 4JB). The proposal involves the demolition of all existing structures on the site—currently occupied by a Sui Generis vehicle breakers yard—and the construction of two single-storey industrial units for flexible use within Use Classes B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage or Distribution), supported by external hardstanding, new access arrangements, a porous drainage system, and associated infrastructure.

This DAS has been produced in accordance with the requirements of Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, as amended by SI 2013/1238, which mandates the submission of a DAS for major development and any scheme for which design and inclusive access are central to its acceptability. The Local Planning Authority (LPA), Rochdale Borough Council, has formally requested this document as part of the validation process, recognising the material planning considerations raised by the proposal—including flood risk (Flood Zone 3), employment intensification, site access constraints, and the need for high-quality industrial design within a sensitive hydrological context.

The purpose of this DAS is to provide a clear and structured explanation of how the proposed development has evolved in response to site constraints, technical studies, planning policy, and best practice design guidance. It demonstrates how the proposal successfully addresses key matters including land use compatibility, flood mitigation, architectural quality, environmental performance, accessibility, and inclusive design principles. The DAS draws on and is closely aligned with the accompanying technical documents submitted in support of the application, namely:

- Planning Statement, setting out the overarching justification for the proposed use, including policy alignment, economic benefits, and planning balance.
- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), detailing the site's flood context and confirming mitigation strategy in line with NPPF (2024) paragraphs 162–167.
- Noise Impact Assessment (NIA), confirming that the scheme will generate no adverse acoustic impacts and is compliant with BS4142:2014+A1:2019.

In doing so, this DAS aims to provide the Council and consultees with a comprehensive understanding of how the design has been conceived and how it performs against national and local planning policy objectives, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) and the Rochdale Core Strategy (2016–2028). Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring the development promotes sustainable industrial growth, accommodates inclusive access, and achieves functional excellence and flood resilience in a constrained post-industrial context.

2. Site Context and Constraints

The application site comprises a previously developed, irregularly rectangular plot of land located on the western side of Corporation Road, within an established industrial zone in Rochdale. The total site area is approximately 1,073m², fully enclosed by perimeter boundaries consisting of a brick wall to the eastern roadside frontage and metal palisade fencing to the northern, southern, and western boundaries. The site lies within a long-standing commercial and industrial precinct, characterised by employment uses spanning Use Classes B2 and B8, including vehicle dismantlers, storage yards, commercial workshops, and distribution hubs. The site has been in continuous commercial use for decades, most recently as an unregulated vehicle breakers yard operating under a Sui Generis classification.

Topographically, the site is generally flat, with ground levels ranging from 113.7 metres to 114.0 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), based on topographic survey data and Environment Agency LiDAR datasets. It is entirely surfaced with impermeable materials, including compacted gravel, tarmac, and reinforced concrete pads used historically for dismantling operations. There is no soft landscaping, soil substrate, or ecological value within the site. The legacy use has resulted in a heavily engineered surface and a degraded visual environment, marked by ad hoc structures, open storage of vehicle parts, and minimal regulatory oversight. These factors contribute to a negative environmental baseline, further justifying the need for comprehensive redevelopment.

Crucially, the site lies wholly within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning, signifying a high probability of fluvial flooding from the nearby River Roch, which lies less than 100 metres to the northeast. The site is hydraulically linked to this watercourse and is included within the modelled floodplain of the Rochdale and Littleborough 2013 fluvial model. Site-specific hydraulic modelling (Environment Agency Product 4, Ref: 5CAFHBTW5N7A) confirms that the site is predicted to experience inundation under the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) event with climate change allowances, with water levels reaching 114.19m AOD (35% uplift scenario) and 115.31m AOD (70% uplift scenario). These levels exceed the existing slab height of the site and introduce substantial constraints that directly inform the development strategy, particularly with respect to finished floor levels, surface water drainage, and passive flood resilience.

There are no trees, hedgerows, or habitats of ecological significance on the site, and no evidence of any protected species. The site is not located within a Conservation Area and is not in proximity to any designated heritage assets or scheduled ancient monuments. Similarly, there are no listed buildings within the immediate or intermediate vicinity, and the site is not subject to any mineral safeguarding designations. It does not fall within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and has no recorded archaeological interest. This absence of ecological and heritage constraints reinforces the site's suitability for brownfield regeneration focused on employment reactivation.

From an urban structure perspective, the site is well connected to the local highway network. Corporation Road forms part of a strategic cluster of industrial plots and provides access to Manchester Road and the A664, facilitating strong logistical integration. Public transport is available within walking distance, with bus services on Manchester Street providing frequent links to Rochdale town centre and the wider Greater Manchester area. However, Corporation Road itself is spatially constrained and not suited to HGV traffic, a factor which has informed the decision to restrict the proposed units to small commercial vehicles only. The surrounding land uses are acoustically industrial in character, generating background LAeq levels in the range of 55–65 dB(A), which informs the

baseline context for noise evaluation and supports the conclusion that the proposed development does not represent an intensification of acoustic exposure.

In summary, the site presents a compelling opportunity for sustainable redevelopment within a policy-supported employment corridor. It is unencumbered by ecological, heritage, or landscape constraints but subject to notable flood risk parameters and access limitations, both of which have been explicitly addressed through design. Its brownfield status, degraded environmental condition, and lack of compatible regulatory structures reinforce the urgent need for coordinated renewal and functional land use intensification in line with both local development objectives and the NPPF's emphasis on efficient reuse of previously developed land.

3. Design Response and Rationale

The proposed development is the outcome of a rigorous design process informed by the operational, environmental, regulatory, and spatial context of the application site. The principal objective has been to rationalise a poorly regulated Sui Generis use—previously associated with high environmental disamenity—and deliver a modern, purpose-built employment facility that meets the functional requirements of contemporary light industrial and storage occupiers while addressing critical constraints such as flood risk, acoustic compatibility, and access. The proposal consists of one detached building comprising two self-contained industrial units, each measuring approximately 173m² in Gross Internal Area (GIA), forming a total GIA of 347m². The layout and structure are fully compliant with Use Classes B2 and B8 as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

The building has been designed as a portal-framed, single-storey structure with a dual-pitched roof, set centrally within the site to maximise manoeuvring and circulation space within the yard. The scale has been carefully calibrated, with an eaves height of 7.5 metres and a ridge height of 10.0 metres, to support internal flexibility for future tenants. This height range enables vertical racking or mezzanine floor installation without external alteration, supporting adaptability and maximising the lifespan of the structure. The form and proportion are consistent with the industrial morphology of the wider area, including neighbouring units on Corporation Road, and maintain visual subordination to taller premises nearby. The building's configuration allows for effective fire separation, unrestricted door access, and visibility from the public realm, supporting both security and legibility.

Externally, the building is clad in Goosewing Grey (RAL 7038) profiled steel panels, selected for their durability, thermal performance, and visual consistency with adjacent developments. Flashings, trim details, roller shutter doors, and ironmongery are finished in Anthracite Grey (RAL 7016) to provide visual contrast and reinforce a cohesive modern industrial aesthetic. The choice of materials is not purely cosmetic; the cladding system features composite insulated panels that contribute to both energy efficiency and acoustic containment, in line with BS8233:2014 and Rochdale Core Strategy Policy DM1. These panels also perform well in wet environments, aligning with the site's classification within Flood Zone 3a.

The design is also underpinned by a fundamental principle of resilience through simplification. Given that traditional flood mitigation (e.g. raising floor levels) would undermine the functionality of industrial units—particularly for palletised goods movement, forklift access, and compliance with Approved Document M—the proposal adopts a passive resilience approach. This includes: floor slabs constructed with flood-compatible concrete and water-resistant additives; raised electrical services positioned above 1.5m AOD; flood-rated roller shutters and pedestrian access doors rated to 1.0 metre

water depth; and a surrounding yard surfaced with porous tarmac to facilitate surface water attenuation. This flood-adapted typology ensures that the building will remain operational during flood events and recoverable post-inundation, without requiring mechanical defences or active intervention by tenants.

Internally, the units are designed to be open-plan, with only essential partitioning for welfare facilities, which include a Part M-compliant accessible WC in each unit. The open configuration allows tenants to fit out the space according to their operational needs within the permitted use class. No mezzanine levels, external gantries, or plant platforms are proposed, which keeps the external form clean, reduces visual massing, and minimises wind loading risks in a flood-sensitive area. Refuse and cycle storage are located adjacent to the site frontage in a secure compound clad in treated timber fencing, ensuring easy access for collections while maintaining a tidy and unobtrusive appearance from the street.

The site layout has also been consciously designed to prioritise safety and access, with clear demarcation of pedestrian and vehicle circulation zones and an uninterrupted 1-metre perimeter footpath facilitating emergency egress and maintenance. The building is set back from the site boundaries by a minimum of 1 metre, ensuring both fire separation compliance and resilience against overland flow accumulation. Each unit is provided with a separate roller shutter and pedestrian door, supporting independent occupation and reducing shared infrastructure reliance—factors which also assist with leasehold management and service demarcation.

From a spatial, functional, and architectural perspective, the design achieves a holistic balance between policy-driven constraints and operational pragmatism. It represents a material uplift in environmental, visual, and economic terms over the site's former use, while providing Rochdale with new high-quality employment floorspace that is low-impact, flood-adapted, and inclusive by design.

4. Access, Servicing, and Movement

The proposed development has been designed to ensure safe, efficient, and inclusive access for all users, in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024), the Equality Act 2010, and Approved Document M: Volume 2 (Buildings Other than Dwellings) of the Building Regulations. The site benefits from a direct connection to Corporation Road, a cul-de-sac serving a cluster of light industrial and commercial premises, which in turn links to the wider highway network via Norman Road and Manchester Road. Vehicular, pedestrian, and servicing access have been integrated into a unified circulation strategy that reflects the functional needs of the proposed use while respecting the physical constraints of the site.

Vehicular access is maintained via an existing dropped kerb access point on Corporation Road. No modifications to the highway are proposed, and the visibility splays, road width, and turning geometry have been confirmed as sufficient for use by small commercial vehicles through swept path analysis. The site is not intended to accommodate articulated HGVs or large-scale goods transport vehicles, reflecting the scale of the units and the target occupiers—primarily small to medium-sized enterprises engaged in local trade, storage, light assembly, or logistics. The site layout provides a 12.2m deep yard, sufficient to accommodate short wheelbase vans, small rigid body trucks, and staff vehicles. Up to six vehicles can be parked simultaneously within the yard without obstruction of roller shutter access or emergency egress routes. Delivery and service vehicle movements are expected to be modest and predictable, with peak trip generation estimated at no more than 10–12 vehicle movements per day, typically concentrated within standard working hours.

Pedestrian access is also taken from Corporation Road, with a defined surface-level route from the public footway to the main entrances of both units. The yard incorporates a 1.0-metre-wide perimeter footpath, allowing uninterrupted pedestrian circulation around the entire building envelope. This design supports access for maintenance personnel, emergency responders, and future occupiers with varying mobility needs. Surfaces are level and slip-resistant, avoiding steps, ramps, or kerb upstands that would present barriers to inclusive access. Door thresholds at each entrance are flush with the yard level, enabling full wheelchair access in line with Part M Section 2A. Internally, each unit includes a wheelchair-accessible WC, designed to provide a minimum 1.5m turning circle, compliant sink and WC positioning, grab rails, an emergency pull cord alarm, and outward-opening access doors. The dimensions, fittings, and spatial allowances reflect the best practice recommendations of BS8300-2:2018, ensuring that each unit is independently usable by disabled employees, visitors, or contractors.

The access strategy also incorporates principles of flood-resilient design without compromising inclusive access. While the site is located in Flood Zone 3a, floor levels have been kept at existing ground level (114.0m AOD) to preserve level thresholds and ensure compliance with Approved Document M. Flood resilience is achieved instead through passive measures: doors and shutters rated to withstand 1.0m inundation; raised service intakes and electrics (>1.5m AOD); and yard profiling to direct overland flow away from entrances. This strategy avoids the need for raised platforms or stepped access, which would otherwise impede wheelchair users and violate inclusive design standards.

Servicing and refuse collection have been addressed through the provision of a dedicated bin store located adjacent to the site entrance. The enclosure accommodates three 1280-litre Eurobins with 1300mm spacing, in accordance with waste management accessibility standards. The enclosure is secured by treated timber palisade fencing, and its location ensures that commercial waste can be collected without vehicles reversing or manoeuvring within restricted spaces. A separate secure cycle storage area is also provided, offering capacity for up to six bicycles under cover, to support active travel and reduce reliance on private car use in accordance with Policy T2 of the Core Strategy and Manual for Streets principles.

The development includes no plant equipment, air conditioning condensers, or rooftop installations that would require external access for servicing. All utilities and maintenance areas are accessed from within the yard or via the perimeter pathway, reducing operational risk and simplifying facility management. Access for emergency services is unimpeded, with turning space for fire appliances and clear routes to all external doors. The building is constructed in accordance with Approved Document B (Fire Safety), with travel distances, door widths, and fire egress provisions factored into the layout.

In summary, the access and movement strategy delivers a fully integrated response to the requirements of occupiers, maintenance teams, service providers, and disabled users. It ensures that all parts of the site can be used safely and inclusively by everyone, regardless of age or ability. The design minimises reliance on adaptation, embeds inclusive and resilient access from the outset, and conforms with national planning guidance, local policy expectations, and the statutory accessibility framework.

5. Environmental Performance and Resilience

Environmental resilience is a foundational aspect of the design strategy for the proposed redevelopment of the Corporation Road site. Given its location within Flood Zone 3a and its proximity—less than 100 metres—to the River Roch, the site presents a set of unique environmental challenges that have been explicitly addressed through the integrated application of passive flood mitigation, sustainable surface water management, acoustic containment, and environmental betterment. The development has been designed to meet the requirements of NPPF 2024 paragraphs 162–167, Rochdale Core Strategy Policy G8 (Managing Water Resources and Flood Risk), and the Environment Agency’s Product 4 hydraulic model data (Ref: 5CAFHBTW5N7A).

The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) confirms that during a 1 in 100-year flood event plus 35% climate change uplift, the modelled flood level at the site is 114.19m AOD, and under the 70% climate uplift scenario, this rises to 115.31m AOD. As the existing site levels range from 113.7m to 114.0m AOD, there is a potential for inundation depths of up to 1.31m in extreme events. Recognising that raising floor levels would render the units functionally unviable—precluding level access for pallet trolleys, wheeled racking, and fork-lift equipment—the scheme adopts a resilience-led strategy rather than one based on elevation avoidance. This approach has been fully justified under the Exception Test criteria within the FRA, demonstrating that the development will be safe for its lifetime, delivers wider sustainability benefits, and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Key resilience measures include:

- Flood-compatible construction materials throughout, including sealed concrete floor slabs, damp-proof blockwork plinths, and non-hygroscopic insulation systems.
- Raised electrics and sockets above 1.5m AOD, preventing service damage and enabling rapid reoccupation post-flood.
- Flood-rated external doors and roller shutters, certified to a water depth of 1.0 metre in accordance with BS 851188:2021, with manual override and watertight seals.
- ACO linear channel drainage along all active frontages, intercepting surface runoff before ingress to internal areas.

The surface water strategy is based on attenuation and infiltration. The existing site comprises 100% impermeable surfacing; in contrast, the proposed development introduces approximately 600m² of porous tarmac, laid over a permeable stone sub-base with integrated storage capacity. This surfacing allows for infiltration at source and reduces peak runoff rates in accordance with the CIRIA SuDS Manual C753. No mechanical or pumped systems are used; the entire drainage design is gravity-fed, passive, and functional in the event of power failure. This approach significantly reduces downstream loading on the existing combined sewer network and aligns with the sustainable urban drainage principles promoted in national and local policy.

Foul drainage will connect to the existing mains system via non-return valves, preventing backflow during surcharge events. Only basic welfare facilities (one WC per unit) are proposed, and there is no significant process water or chemical effluent anticipated. Wastewater volumes will be negligible and fully compatible with the existing infrastructure capacity.

In terms of noise management, the development marks a substantial improvement over the historic use. The site previously operated as an open-air breakers yard, generating frequent, unregulated impulsive noise events, including engine dismantling, hammering, and metal-on-metal collisions. These activities presented a high acoustic burden to neighbouring premises and contributed to poor environmental quality. In contrast, the proposed B2/B8 units are entirely enclosed and acoustically insulated. The Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) confirms that internal operations will be contained within a composite-clad building envelope rated at 35–40 dB Rw, reducing the rating level of external emissions to below 35 dB LAeq at receptor locations. No external plant, PA systems, or HGV deliveries are proposed. The result is a net reduction in acoustic exposure, fully compliant with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 and the objectives of Rochdale Core Strategy Policy G9 (Reducing the Impact of Pollution).

In addition to flood and acoustic performance, the scheme also provides qualitative environmental betterment in visual, functional, and operational terms. The removal of unregulated waste processing and ad hoc structures will improve local air quality, reduce fire risk, and support compliance with modern environmental health standards. The replacement of a hard-engineered, neglected scrap yard with a structured, regulated, and flood-adapted employment use represents a significant uplift in land value and environmental contribution.

Although the site is not subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) due to its sealed, zero-habitat baseline, the proposal introduces porous surfacing and reduces pollution sources, contributing indirectly to urban environmental resilience. The development is designed to be robust against climate change, resilient to flood events, and operationally sound in a high-risk hydrological context—all without reliance on external defences, active systems, or public funding. These attributes demonstrate full compliance with sustainable development principles and support the case for granting permission.

6. Summary and Conclusion

The proposed redevelopment of land at Corporation Road, Rochdale (OL11 4JB) constitutes a robust and well-justified industrial intensification project that aligns with both national and local planning policy objectives. This Design and Access Statement has demonstrated that the scheme has been developed through a process of careful analysis, responsive design, and integrated environmental strategy, resulting in a proposal that is sustainable, inclusive, flood-resilient, and policy-compliant in every material respect.

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of two single-storey industrial/storage units within Use Classes B2 and B8, replacing an outdated and environmentally problematic breakers yard use with modern, enclosed, and functionally efficient employment premises. The proposal delivers a gross internal area of 347m² across two modular units, supported by a clearly demarcated service yard, compliant pedestrian access routes, secure refuse and cycle storage, and a porous tarmac surface water drainage system designed in accordance with national SuDS principles. The scheme enhances land use compatibility, optimises space efficiency, and introduces an enduring employment use within a safeguarded industrial estate, consistent with the employment objectives of Rochdale Core Strategy Policy E2 (Increasing Jobs and Prosperity).

The development has been specifically designed to function within a Flood Zone 3a context, with floor levels maintained at existing site levels to preserve level access and ensure compliance with Approved Document M of the Building Regulations. Through a package of passive resilience measures—including flood-rated doors, raised electrics, and

water-tolerant construction—the proposal demonstrates that it will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere, thereby satisfying both the Sequential Test and Exception Test as required by NPPF paragraphs 162–167. The integration of porous surfacing also secures a significant reduction in surface water runoff relative to the existing 100% impermeable yard, delivering quantifiable environmental betterment.

From an amenity standpoint, the proposal is demonstrably less intrusive than the site's historic use. The Noise Impact Assessment confirms that enclosed operations, acoustic cladding, and the absence of external plant or open working will significantly reduce off-site noise emissions. The development achieves full compliance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019, Rochdale Core Strategy Policy G9 (Reducing the Impact of Pollution), and the Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE). At the same time, inclusive design measures—such as step-free access, accessible WCs, and barrier-free circulation—ensure that the development meets the access needs of all users, as required by the Equality Act 2010 and BS8300-2:2018.

The architectural form, material specification, and building massing are appropriate to the site's industrial setting and have been selected to ensure long-term durability, low maintenance, and visual compatibility with neighbouring units. The result is a development that enhances the urban grain of Corporation Road, improves environmental performance, and activates an underperforming brownfield site for productive economic use. No significant harm has been identified, and there are no technical objections to the development based on noise, flooding, access, or amenity.

In the planning balance, the proposal offers clear and compelling public benefits, including:

- Creation of new employment floorspace with capacity to support 3–6 full-time jobs;
- Reuse of previously developed brownfield land in accordance with NPPF paragraph 120;
- Enhancement of local visual and environmental quality;
- Surface water betterment and flood resilience in a high-risk area;
- Elimination of an environmentally incompatible use; and
- Compliance with inclusive design and sustainable development principles.

Accordingly, and in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF paragraph 11), it is respectfully submitted that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development without delay. The scheme represents an exemplar model of brownfield employment intensification, compatible with Rochdale's long-term strategic vision, and secured through high-quality, flood-conscious design.



