

2573-10

Planning Statement

Proposed Change of Use of A1 Retail Building to B8 Self Storage

Moon Retail Park, Roch Valley Way, Rochdale, OL11 4QN

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement supports a full planning application for the change of use of the premises at Moon Retail Park, Roch Valley Way, Rochdale, OL11 4QN (the "Site") from Class E(a) retail (formerly Use Class A1) to Class B8 self-storage. The application is submitted on behalf of Metalcraft, hereinafter referred to as the Applicant.

1.2 The proposal seeks to repurpose an existing retail warehouse unit, approximately 45,000 square feet (4,180 square metres) of gross internal floorspace, into a modern self-storage facility. \

The only external alteration proposed is the installation of a new roller shutter to facilitate secure access, which the Applicant considers falls under permitted development rights as per the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO). Internal works include subdivision into storage units, office space, and ancillary facilities, with no extensions or demolitions proposed.

1.3 The Site is currently vacant, having been marketed for retail use without success, reflecting shifts in the retail sector towards online commerce. The proposed change of use will bring the premises back into productive economic use, supporting local business and community needs while aligning with national and local planning policies.

1.4 This Statement assesses the proposal against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), the Rochdale Core Strategy (adopted October 2016), and other material considerations. It demonstrates that the development is acceptable, delivers economic benefits, and results in no significant adverse impacts.

2. Site Description and Surroundings

2.1 The Site is a purpose-built retail warehouse unit within Moon Retail Park, Roch Valley Way, Rochdale, OL11 4QN. The two-storey structure includes ground and first-floor trading areas, served by a customer lift and escalators, with approximately 70 dedicated car parking spaces (including disabled spaces) and a service yard suitable for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

2.2 Constructed with a steel frame and brick/clad elevations, the building has a modern appearance suited to its roadside location. The site area is approximately 1.5 hectares, primarily occupied by the building footprint, with limited external space beyond parking and servicing areas.

2.3 Moon Retail Park is located 1.5 miles south of Rochdale town centre, adjacent to the A627(M) motorway spur, providing excellent connectivity to the M62 (Junction 20) and Manchester (circa 12 miles south). The Site fronts Roch Valley Way (B6452), a key arterial route linking to the town centre and residential areas.

2.4 Surrounding uses include retail and leisure outlets to the north and east (e.g., supermarkets, fast-food restaurants), industrial estates to the south, and residential neighbourhoods to the west, separated by landscaping. The area is well-served by public transport, with bus routes along Roch Valley Way and Rochdale railway station 1 mile away.

2.5 The Site is not within a designated town centre, primary shopping area, or protected employment allocation. It lies in Flood Zone 1 (low flood risk) and outside Green Belt, conservation areas, or ecological designations.

3. Planning History

3.1 The Site was developed as a retail warehouse in the early 2000s

4. The Proposal

4.1 The proposed development involves the change of use of the existing building to Class B8 self-storage, comprising:

- Internal subdivision into 500-600 secure storage units (10 sq ft lockers to 200 sq ft rooms).
- Ancillary office space (circa 500 sq ft) for management and customer reception.
- Installation of internal racking, lighting, and security systems (e.g., CCTV, access controls).
- Retention of existing customer circulation space

A single external alteration: installation of a new roller shutter to replace an existing entrance, compliant with GPDO permitted development rights (Part 7, Class A).

4.2 The roller shutter will be designed to match the building's existing aesthetic, ensuring no material impact on the external appearance, in line with GPDO requirements. No other external changes, such as signage or cladding, are proposed under this application, though future signage may be subject to separate advertisement consent.

4.3 Operational hours are proposed as 08:00-18:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00-17:00 Saturdays, and 10:00-16:00 Sundays/Bank Holidays, with 24/7 access for registered customers via secure key fobs. The facility will employ 4-6 full-time staff, generating low-intensity traffic from private vehicles and small vans.

4.4 Self-storage, while Class B8, supports small businesses, households, and e-commerce, distinguishing it from traditional warehousing. Sustainability measures include energy-efficient lighting and potential EV charging points in the car park.

5. Planning Policy Framework

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

5.1.1 The NPPF presumes in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11), approving proposals unless adverse impacts significantly outweigh benefits. Chapter 6 (Building a Strong, Competitive Economy) supports economic growth, including flexible site adaptation for storage and logistics (Paragraphs 85-87).

5.1.2 Chapter 7 (Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres) promotes diversification in response to retail changes (Paragraph 90). As self-storage is not a main town centre use, it is exempt from sequential testing, but impacts on vitality must be considered (Paragraphs 91, 94).

5.1.3 Chapter 11 (Making Effective Use of Land) encourages reuse of under-utilised brownfield sites (Paragraphs 124-128), supporting alternative uses where they meet needs without harming key sectors.

5.2 Rochdale Core Strategy (2016)

5.2.1 The Core Strategy aims for 210 hectares of employment land and economic prosperity (Spatial Objective SO2). Policy E1 focuses retail in town centres but allows out-of-centre developments subject to impact assessments. Policy E2 supports diverse economic uses, including storage, while Policy E3 identifies logistics as a growth sector. Policy E4 permits changes of use for unviable employment sites, provided alternative employment-generating uses are proposed.

5.2.2 Additional policies include G9 (Reducing Carbon Emissions), DM1 (General Development Requirements) for amenity and design, and T2 (Improving Accessibility) for transport impacts.

5.2.3 The emerging Local Plan update (2024 consultation) emphasises flexible economic development, but the adopted Core Strategy prevails.

5.3 General Permitted Development Order (GPDO)

5.3.1 The proposed roller shutter is considered permitted development under Part 7, Class A of the GPDO, which allows alterations to commercial buildings for operational purposes, provided they do not materially affect the external appearance. The shutter will be sympathetic to the building's design, ensuring compliance with GPDO conditions.

6. Assessment of the Proposal

6.1 Principle of Development

6.1.1 The proposal aligns with NPPF Paragraphs 85-87 and 124-128 by repurposing a vacant brownfield site for economic use in an accessible location. As the Site is unviable for retail, the change to Class B8 complies with Core Strategy Policies E2 and E4, supporting employment land productivity.

6.1.2 Self-storage provides flexible space for SMEs, e-commerce, and households, distinct from low-employment warehousing. No protected retail allocation is lost, as the Site is out-of-centre.

6.2 Economic Benefits

6.2.1 The development will create 4-6 direct jobs and support indirect employment through business users. It addresses demand for storage in Rochdale, where retail park vacancies reflect market shifts. This supports NPPF economic goals and Core Strategy SO2 without prejudicing town centre investment.

6.3 Impact on Town Centre Vitality

6.3.1 As self-storage is not a main town centre use, no sequential test applies (NPPF Paragraph 91). An impact assessment confirms no adverse effects on Rochdale town centre, given the distinct nature of self-storage and the Site's vacancy. Trade diversion is negligible, supporting diversification per NPPF Paragraph 90.

6.4 Transport and Accessibility

6.4.1 The Site's proximity to the A627(M) and public transport ensures sustainable access. Traffic generation is low, requiring no highway improvements, in line with Core Strategy Policy T2 and NPPF Chapter 9.

6.5 Design, Appearance, and Amenity

6.5.1 The only external change, a new roller shutter, is permitted under the GPDO and designed to match the building's aesthetic, ensuring no material impact on appearance. Internal operations are low-noise and contained, with no adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity, per Core Strategy Policy DM1.

6.6 Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

6.6.1 Reusing the existing building minimises embodied carbon, aligning with NPPF Paragraph 161. Energy-efficient lighting and potential biodiversity enhancements (e.g., EV charging points) comply with Policy G9. No flood, heritage, or ecological risks are identified.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The proposed change of use to a Class B8 self-storage facility represents a sustainable reuse of a vacant retail unit, delivering economic benefits while complying with the NPPF and Rochdale Core Strategy. The single external alteration—a roller shutter—is permitted under the GPDO, ensuring minimal visual impact. The proposal results in no significant harms to the town centre, transport network, amenity, or environment.

7.2 The Local Planning Authority is respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the change of use, noting that the roller shutter installation is considered permitted development.