

Officers Report

Case Reference: 25/01131/FUL
Location: UNIT 2, STAKEHILL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, FINLAN ROAD,
MIDDLETON, MANCHESTER, M24 2RW
Proposal: Partial demolition, alteration and extension to form commercial
vehicle workshop, authorised testing facility and external HGV
storage area
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Rosalind Gralton

SITE

The site relates to Unit 2 of Stakehill Industrial Estate. The site is home to 2 modern industrial looking buildings and one, much older, dilapidating industrial building.

The blue edge boundary also includes the West Pennine Tucks Ltd unit, just south of the site.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the partial demolition, alteration and extension of the existing units, in order to form commercial vehicle workshop, authorised testing facility and external HGV storage area.

As part of the works an external ramp is proposed as well as a concrete lego block retaining wall.

A proposed Authorised Testing Facility (ATF) lane is proposed to the western boundary of the site.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone (PfE):

Policy JP-S1 – Sustainable Development

Policy JP-J1 – Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth

Policy JP-J2 – Employment Sites and Premises

Policy JP-C7 – Freight and Logistics

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1 Delivering a more prosperous economy

E2 Increasing jobs and prosperity

E3 Focusing on economic growth corridors and areas

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P1 Improving image

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

T2 Improving accessibility

DM1 General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

EC/2 Primary Employment Zones

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

25/00939/DEM - Unit 3 Bentley Avenue, Stakehill Industrial Estate. Middleton, M24
2GP - Application for prior approval for the partial demolition of buildings - Grant
subject to conditions - 2025-10-23

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways And Engineering

No objections

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage

No objections subject to conditions

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

No objections. Bat boxes to be secured via condition. Informative recommended.

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No objections. Conditions recommended.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification. Two objections were received.

Concerns were raised regarding evening, weekend or 24 hour operations at the site due to residential properties. Concerns of light pollution. Concerns raised regarding HGV parking outside resident homes.

PRINCIPLE

The application site falls within a Primary Employment Zone as set out under saved UDP Policy EC/3 which should be read in conjunction with Policies E2 and E3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy. Policy E2 seeks to ensure a sufficient supply of land for employment uses to increase jobs, whilst Policy E3 aims to focus employment development on high quality sites in economic growth areas, including Stakehill Business Park, where the application site is located.

The application relates to partial demolition, alteration and extension of the existing units, in order to form commercial vehicle workshop, authorised testing facility and external HGV storage area. As part of the works an external ramp is proposed as well as a concrete lego block retaining wall. The Authorised Testing Facility (ATF) lane is proposed to the western boundary of the site. Following the partial demolition to the southern elevation of the building, a new gable end is proposed flush with the proposed ATF testing lane, which includes a 6m wide and 5m high vehicle door. No change of use is proposed and the proposal would continue to support the operations of a local business in an established economic growth area.

Subject to the assessment of all other material planning considerations, the principle of development is therefore acceptable, in accordance with Policies E2 and E3 of the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF.

DESIGN

The NPPF states achieving good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and decisions should ensure developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. This is also reflected in Policy JP-P1 of the PfE and Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, which require development to respect local context with regard to siting, size, scale, massing, height and materials.

The proposed works include the erection of a new ramp and palisade fencing, along with the partial demolition and alteration of the existing Unit 2, which will accommodate a ATF lane. The ATF lane will be used to test and service heavy goods vehicles.

The proposed extension comprises of 195sqm of floorspace, and would be a lean to extension constructed in matching materials to the existing industrial building. Following the partial demolition to the south elevation, a new gable end is proposed, with an eaves height of 6.1m, and a ridge height of 7.3m. The eaves height and ridge height would match that of the existing industrial building. The proposed south elevation also features a vehicle entrance on the ATF lane and a vehicle entrance on the south elevation, giving access into the workshop area. This is shown on the Proposed Floor Plans.

The proposed design of the works are of a similar height and lightweight design to the existing development. The resultant development is therefore not considered to have a material visual impact on the character of the immediate street scene. The proposed extension would be set 39m south of Bentley Avenue. It is not considered, from a visual amenity perspective, the proposals would result in any unacceptable impact.

A cycle shelter is proposed, which is considered acceptable.

It is noted on the eastern side of the site, where two buildings are to be demolished to create a car park (with the demolition previously approved via a prior notification application), that the proposed regrading and concrete hardstanding is acceptable. The design of the ramp which is situated between the unit and southern part of the site, as well as the proposed lego concrete blocks, are considered acceptable.

The design of the proposal is therefore acceptable and accords with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted PfE and the NPPF.

IMPACT UPON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY INCLUDING NOISE

Protection of residential amenity is considered under Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, which states development proposals should ensure they do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy. Policy G9 of the Core Strategy also states the council will reduce all forms of pollution in the borough by 'requiring that development does not have impacts that would lead to an unacceptable increase in [...] noise, light or other pollution'. This is supported further in NPPF Paragraph 135 (f), promoting health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

In relation to the design of the proposed building extension, new gable end and works to the boundary treatments and ramp within the site, the proposals are not considered to cause undue harm by way of overbearing or overshadowing neighbouring properties. These works are located a minimum of 39m away from the highway of Bentley Avenue which is a significant distance from the residential properties.

The application is supported by a noise impact assessment. With regard to the impact of noise and light owing from the development, the Environmental Health Officer was consulted. The Environmental Health Officer reviewed the assessment which shows a 1dB increase based on the worst case scenario. In their view the absolute level of noise (39dB) is considered low and no adverse impact of noise is predicted. In the context of a established industrial estate, the predicted rating of 1dB above existing background levels is not considered significance. Conditions were recommended in relation to roller shutters remaining closed during certain times of the day, restrictions regarding hours of construction and demolition, no external lighting to be installed without prior written consent of the LPA, and the submission of a construction management plan prior to works commencing. The details of hours of construction and demolition will be covered within the construction management plan.

The proposal is therefore acceptable in accordance with Policy DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF.

HIGHWAYS AND PARKING

Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy requires development proposals to provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location.

The proposal is supported by a Transport Statement. As stated in paragraph 5.24 of the report, the proposal would result in 125 less trips daily. The report concludes there are no traffic or transportation grounds in which the proposal should be refused. The Council's Highways Officer was consulted on the proposals and has stated the traffic generation associated with usage is within acceptable limits, the proposed parking appears adequate and the proposed site access is established with an acceptable swept path analysis. The officer concludes there are no new road safety concerns resulting from the proposals. Consequently, no objections are raised.

Concerns raised in representations relating to traffic is noted. It is acknowledged that Bentley Avenue and Slattocks Roundabout have been subject to continued traffic issues. However, regards have been had to Paragraph 116 of the NPPF which states that "development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios."

Based on the scale of the site and the extent of its operations, and taking into account of the cumulative impacts to the existing road conditions, the impact of the proposed development upon highway safety is not considered to be so significant as to amount to unacceptable harm.

The proposal would therefore not result in any undue harm to highway safety and would accord with Policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy.

ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions including 'developments below the threshold', every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met. This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

PfE Policy JP-G8 also states that through local planning and associated activities a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought where relevant. Development will be expected to achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%.

In support of the application, the applicant has provided the following:

- BNG Baseline Plan
- BNG Exemption Letter
- Preliminary Roost Assessment - Bat Survey Report

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) have reviewed the application and have confirmed that the two main considerations of this application are BNG and Bats

The application is supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) baseline plan and exemption statement. It is confirmed the site has no wildlife interest or vegetation, and the site is exempt from mandatory BNG under the de minimis rule.

A bat assessment has been provided for all buildings in the northern area of the site. The Ecology officer has stated that, in relation to this application only, it is very unlikely that bat roosts will be disturbed as these are on the northern elevation of the workshop to the east of the building to be extended. As such, an informative advising that bats can turn up in unexpected locations has been added to the decision notice.

In relation to the proposed enhancement, it is recommended given the presence of bat roosts on the adjacent buildings which are approved for demolition under prior approval, two bat boxes on the west or east elevation on the northern brick elevation of the building to be extended, is secured. This will ensure less disruption and near to existing roosts. The case officer is in agreement with these recommendations and a condition securing bat boxes to this part of the building is secured to the decision notice.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (7)

- 1 The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason. Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 This permission relates to the following plans:

- Amended Site Location Plan Received by the Council 14/01/2026
- Ramp and Retaining Walls
- Site Sections - Planning Proposal - Site Plan - Dwg No 2025-3012-23 Dated October 2025
- Existing Conditions - Outbuilding Plan and Elevations - Dwg No 2025-3012-03 Dated July 2025
- Existing Floor Plans - Existing Conditions Floor Plans - Dwg No 2025-3012-01
- Planning Proposal Site Plan - Dwg No 2025-30122-22 Rev F - Dated October 2025 - received by the Council 18/02/2026
- Existing Elevations - Existing Conditions Sections and Elevations - Dwg No 2025-3012-02 - Dated October 2025
- Planning Proposal Floor Plans - Dwg No 2025-3012-20 - Dated October 2025
- Proposed Elevation - Dwg No 2025-3012-21 - Planning Proposal Section and Elevation - Dated October 2025
- Existing Site Plan Dwg No 2025-3012-04 - Dated September 2025
- Amended Proposed Fencing - Sales Drawing 2m High Euroguard Extra Fencing Drawing No J6/01059 - received by the Council 18/02/2026
- Amended Proposed Fencing Spec - Euroguard Extra - received by the Council 18/02/2026

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings hereby approved unless otherwise required by the conditions below.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan, the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 No development shall take place until a surface water drainage scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. For the avoidance of doubt, foul and surface water shall drain on separate systems and any submission include:

- An investigation of the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Policy Framework (or any subsequent amendment thereof). This investigation shall include evidence of an assessment of ground conditions and the potential for infiltration of surface water.
- The background calculations of the MicroDrainage® model or any other software or calculations that have been used for the drainage design.
- Construction details for permeable paving including sub-base details e.g. cross-section, if this type of paving forms part of the sustainable drainage system.

The duly approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of any part of the development, and shall be retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To promote sustainable development, secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution. To prevent an increased risk of flooding as a result of the development and to ensure satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site in accordance with Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S4 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: Drainage infrastructure will need to be implemented prior to commencement of above ground works and a scheme therefore needs to be agreed in advance of the same.

- 4 The materials used in the construction of the exterior of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the construction of the exterior of the existing building in colour, form, type, size and texture.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5 No development shall take place (including any demolition, site clearance or preparation works) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for that phase has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, this shall include the following:

- a. loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- b. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- c. the erection and maintenance of security hoarding;
- d. measures to protect surrounding sensitive receptors from fugitive dust and debris both during and after the construction phase;

e. hours of construction on weekdays, weekends and bank holidays.

The approved method statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved method statement without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To minimise the detrimental effects to the natural environment through risks of pollution during the construction phase in accordance with Policies DM1, G7 and G9 of the Core Strategy, Policies JP-P1 and JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason for Pre-Commencement: Site clearance poses a threat to the surrounding natural environment and to surrounding occupiers and a scheme therefore needs to be agreed in advance of any works taking place.

- 6 No external lighting shall be installed on the building or within the car park area unless and until a detailed scheme of lighting design has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include the position and height on the building, luminance, angle of installation, hours of luminance and any hoods to be fixed to the lights. The external lighting shall be installed in complete accordance with the approved scheme and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual and neighbour amenity P3, G9 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 7 The extended building shall not be brought into first use until details of no. 2 bat boxes to be secured to the western or eastern brick elevation of the unit to be extended, are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include a specification of the bat box to be used and the position of the fixing shown on plan.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers no net loss of biodiversity in compliance with policies G6 and G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan.

INFORMATIVE:

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All bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006; and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010). Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during development, work must stop immediately and Natural England contacted for further advice. This is a legal requirement under the Wildlife and Countryside

Act 1981 (as amended) and applies to whoever carries out the work. All contractors on site should be made aware of this requirement.