

Officer Report

Case Reference: 25/01080/FUL
Location: 105 OLDHAM ROAD, ROCHDALE, OL16 5QT
Proposal: Change of use from ground floor commercial unit (Use Class E) to two self-contained flats (Use Class C3) with associated landscaping works and alterations to front and rear elevations including installation of fenestration and application of render to existing rear extension.
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application relates to the ground floor of no. 105 Oldham Road, a two storey, mid-terrace property which comprises a tyre repair shop with two flats above at first floor level. The ground floor unit is accessed to the rear from Back Oldham Road where there is a rear service yard and single storey extension providing a shopfront. The first floor flats are accessed via a single door on the front elevation. The terraced block is characterised by a mix of commercial and residential units. Both the adjoining properties appear to comprise vacant commercial spaces at ground floor level with residential accommodation above. The application site is located within a designated Linear Commercial Area and is sustainably located within walking distance of Rochdale train station.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the change of use of the ground floor of the building to provide two self-contained flats. Flat 1 would have a double bedroom and Flat 2 would have two single bedrooms. The gross internal floor areas of the flats would be 51.8 sqm and 69.5 sqm. Flat 1 would be accessible from the rear and Flat 2 would be accessible from the front and rear. The rear yard would provide an off-street parking space for each flat and two areas for bin storage. The existing boundary treatments would remain; however planted beds would be constructed around the rear yard. The existing single storey rear extension would be retained and partially re-built with new openings and render applied to the external walls. To the front, the existing shopfront and doors would be removed and re-built using brickwork with the outer leaf at first floor level to be taken down and re-built to match the ground floor brickwork. No material specification has been provided.

RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

N/A

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE):

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-H1 Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development

JP-H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

JP-H4 Density of New Housing

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

C1 Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places

C2 Focusing on regeneration areas and economic growth corridors / areas

C3 Delivering the right type of housing

E1 Establishing thriving town, district and local centres

E3 Focusing on economic growth corridors and areas

G9 Reducing the impact of pollution

P1 Improving image

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

T2 Improving accessibility

DM1 General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

G/R/1 Physical Regeneration

G/S/1 Hierarchy and Role of Centres

S/6 District Centre, Local Centres and Linear Commercial Areas

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (June 2016).

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: 12/03/2026

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: 09/03/2026

Weekly List: 25/03/2026

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Defined Urban Area as allocated under saved UDP Policy G/D/1. New development, wherever possible and appropriate, should be concentrated within the urban area in order to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside. PfE establishes the need for at least 616 net additional dwellings per year in Rochdale to meet the housing needs of the Borough and states that new housing should be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high-quality design.

The site is also within a defined linear commercial area identified as the 'Oldham Road–Milnrow Road linear commercial area' by saved UPD Policy S/6. This policy notes that the conversion or redevelopment of vacant commercial premises to residential use will only be permitted in local centres that have a high overall vacancy rate and where it will assist regeneration.

The application is supported by a Linear Commercial Area Assessment which highlights '36 separate units, of which 18 are vacant, and 3 are in residential use. Thus, the vacancy rate is 50%.' Given the average vacancy rate as of mid-2025 for town centres across the UK was approximately 13% to 14.5%, it is considered that the Oldham Road–Milnrow Road linear commercial area has a high overall vacancy rate. On this basis and considering the existing prevalence of residential units in the linear commercial area, it is considered that the proposed use would assist regeneration and contribute to the vitality of the area.

Furthermore, the proposal would contribute towards the housing supply within the Borough, while being in a highly sustainable location in close proximity to local amenities and public transport services, including Rochdale train station.

The principle of the change of use is therefore acceptable, subject to all other material planning considerations as assessed below.

Visual Amenity

The NPPF states that 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 PfE Policy JP-P1 and CS Policies DM1 and P3, which require development to respect local context with regard to siting, size, scale, massing, height and materials.

The proposed change of use would result in the removal of the existing shopfront which would be bricked with three new openings formed. The proposed design and arrangements of fenestration, as well as the inclusion of sills and lintels, would reflect the traditional character of the terraced block and the proposed windows would align with the existing first-floor windows to preserve the pattern of development.

No concerns are had with the alterations and re-building of the existing single storey rear extension, which would likely improve the appearance of the rear elevation.

The materials proposed are deemed acceptable in principle, however a detailed material specification is required by condition given the limited detail provided under the current application.

The proposed plans indicate sufficient space for refuse bins to be stored in the rear curtilage away from public view which would represent a satisfactory arrangement.

Taken as a whole, the proposed alterations would not detract from the established character and appearance of the street scene and would constitute a satisfactory standard of design. The proposal is therefore acceptable, in accordance with CS Policies DM1 and P3, the SPD, PfE Policy JP-P1 and the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

Protection of residential amenity is considered under CS Policy DM1, which states that 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.’

The proposed windows would not face any residential properties to the front or rear and therefore the proposed arrangements would provide a satisfactory level of privacy to both the host occupants and neighbouring residents

With reference to the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standards (NDSS), Flat 1 is a single storey, one bedroom, one person dwelling with a gross internal floor area of 51.8 sqm, which complies with the NDSS 50 sqm requirement. Flat 2 is a single storey, two bedroom, two person dwelling with a gross internal floor area of 69.5 sqm, which complies with the NDSS 61 sqm requirement. Both flats provide sufficient storage space. Moreover, all bedrooms would comply with the minimum floor area requirements. On this basis, the proposed flats would provide sufficient living space for future occupants.

The submitted plans indicate the provision of natural light to all habitable rooms and that sufficient rear amenity space of a functional layout would be provided. As such, the proposed development would ensure an acceptable standard of living for existing and future occupants.

Taken as a whole, the proposal would provide an acceptable living environment for future occupants while also protecting the amenity of neighbouring residents, in accordance with CS Policy DM1, the SPD, PfE Policy JP-P1 and the NPPF.

Noise

CS Policy G9 requires that applications do not lead to an unacceptable increase in noise or other pollution. Policy DM1 requires that development is compatible with surrounding land uses in terms of its impact upon amenities of neighbouring residents and also requires that developments mitigate against any impacts due to noise.

The proposed flats would form part of a terraced block of existing residential and commercial properties fronting Oldham Road. Given the established pattern of development in this location it is considered that the proposed residential accommodation would be more compatible with the neighbouring properties than the existing ground floor use. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal would result in noise impacts and disturbance detrimental to either the host occupants or neighbouring occupants, in accordance with CS Policies G9 and DM1.

Highways and Parking

CS Policy DM1 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 property is located in a highly sustainable location within walking distance of Rochdale train station and with access to regular bus services on Oldham Road. Therefore, access to amenities and employment opportunities is plentiful. In any event, the proposed site plan indicates the provision of two off-street parking spaces, which is considered more than sufficient for this location.

It is not considered that the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, in accordance with CS Policies DM1 and T2, and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION - Grant subject to the following conditions:

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

N/A

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. No significant problems have arisen during the consideration of this application, and the application has been determined in a timely manner, in accordance with the policies with the Development Plan.

Human Rights and Public Sector Equality Duty

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report. In particular, Article 6 (1), of the European Convention on Human Rights in relation civil rights and a fair hearing; Article 8 of the ECHR in relation to the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 Protocol 1 of the ECHR in relation to the protection of property have all been taken into account.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Local Planning Authority under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application. In particular due regard has been afforded to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers are satisfied that the application material and Officers' assessment has taken into account these issues.

The application has been considered in accordance with the Rochdale Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy – Embracing All Voices (2024-2026), which seeks to promote a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion that benefit the community as a whole.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (4)

- 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 The permission relates to the following plans:

- Existing. Dwg no. S509-01
- Proposals. Dwg no. S509-02

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 adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 No above ground works shall take place until such time as a detailed specification and/or samples of materials to be used externally in the construction of the development have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include the type, colour and texture of the materials. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the duly approved details thereafter.

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.

- 4 The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until such time as a noise impact assessment which specifies a scheme of sound insulation to the facade of the building, or a demonstration that this is not required, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The approved sound insulation measures shall be installed prior to the first occupation of the approved development and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interest of providing satisfactory internal conditions and in accordance with Policies G9 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.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay.