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Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council,
Economy and Environment,
Planning Service,
Rochdale,
OL16 1XU

Submitted on-line through the Planning Portal Only

24th February 2026

Dear Sir / Madam,

Former Car Repairs Garage adjacent to Oakwood Cottage, Bamford Road, Heywood, OL10 4AG

Hayley Knight Planning Limited, on behalf of Uearthed (Homes) Ltd, hereby apply to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for planning permission for the change of use of the former car repairs garage adjacent to Oakwood Cottage, off Bamford Road in Heywood, to 3 no. new dwellings, together with associated external alterations.

The remainder of this letter sets out a brief description of the Site and its context; the proposed development and an introduction to the Applicant; and an assessment of the scheme against the identified planning policy context.

This planning application comprises of the following documents, as submitted on the Planning Portal (reference PP-14720173):

- Application form;
- Location Plan, reference 0094-01 (02)100 revision A;
- Topographical Survey, reference 80771MCLS-01;
- Existing and Proposed Site Plan, reference 0094-01 (02)103 revision A;
- Proposed Plans and Elevations Plan, reference 0094-01 (02)102;
- Bat Survey Report;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Calculation Tool;
- Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Report;
- Visibility Splays Plan, reference ITM210720-GA-001;
- Swept Path Analysis- Estate Car Plan, reference ITM210720-GA-002;
- Key Facilities Plan; and
- Scheme Visuals.

These documents should be read alongside this submission letter, which sets out the planning considerations associated with the proposals.



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The requisite fee of £1,764.00 has been paid directly through the Planning Portal.

The Site

The Site comprises of a previously development area of land that is occupied by a car repairs garage. The garage has not been in use for a number of years, after it was acquired by the former owner of Oakwood Cottage, following the closure of the garage.

The building is constructed of red brick with a pitched roof that comprises principally of tiles, but with a corrugated metal sheeting the front part of the building, which has a gentler pitch than the main roof. Three large irregular wooden doors are located on the frontage of the building, facing the entrance into the Site off Bamford Road. There are four window openings on the rear elevation of the building, overlooking Oakwood Cottage. There are no windows or openings on the side elevations of the building.

A hardstanding courtyard of approximately 5 metres separates the back of the garage from Oakwood Cottage.

The garage building is currently comprises of a single storey, with generous floor to ceiling heights internally, reflective of the former commercial use of the Site. The building does have a suspended ceiling. It is clear that the building has capacity for two storeys, but this was not needed when the building was last in use hence the suspended ceiling, with storage space above.

The garage is located behind a row of terrace properties that front Bamford Road. The Site is linked to the public highway network (Bamford Road) via a shared access with Oakwood Cottage, and 205-193 Bamford Road.

The Site is located wholly within the Green Belt as identified on the Rochdale Local Plan Policies Map. The Site is not located in a Flood Zone as identified on the Government Flood Map for Planning¹, nor is it located in an Air Quality Management Area as identified on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on-line mapping². The Site is also not an identified heritage asset, nor is it located in proximity to a heritage asset or a Conservation Area.

The Site has no planning application history available on the Council's web-site.

Site Context

The Site is surrounded by existing residential dwellings.

Oakwood Cottage is a two storey red brick detached dwelling located immediately to the north of the Site. It has one window overlooking the courtyard that separates the garage building from Oakwood Cottage, which is into the hallway. The Applicant is currently renovating Oakwood Cottage with a view to putting it on the market shortly. As part of these renovations the Applicant is creating hardstanding to the front of Oakwood Cottage for use for the future occupiers. Vehicular access to Oakwood Cottage will continue to be via the shared access onto Bamford Road.

Immediately to the east of the Site is a row of two storey terraces houses fronting Bamford Road. They are all two

¹ [Map – Flood map for planning – GOV.UK](#)

² [AQMA's interactive map](#)



storeys in height, staggered in height as Bamford Road inclines. These houses comprise of a mix of red brick and render finished, and tile roofs. The houses themselves are separated from the Site by rear yards that range in length between 3 and 7 metres. Due to the incline heading north up Bamford Road, the ground level of the houses and rear yards to the east of the Site are just over 1 metre higher than the Site.

Immediately to the south of the Site is Victoria Terrace, a one-sided cul-de-sac which is approximately 4 metres lower than the Site ground levels. Victoria Terrace comprises of a row of terraces houses, two storeys in height facing the Site. The cul-de-sac turns into a bridleway from its northern end which follows the River Roach.

All of the surrounding dwellings are typical of terrace housing in the early 1900's when they were constructed. That is they are predominantly constructed of red brick with tile roofs, chimneys, and modest rear courtyards. Over time some of the properties have been extended from the rear elevation, with some benefitting from roof terraces.

The Site is located approximately 850 metres to the north of Heywood Town Centre.

Bus stops for services connecting the Site to Heywood, Norden and Bury, are available on Bamford Road 50 metres from the junction of the shared access with Bamford Road.

The Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises of the change of use and renovation of the repairs garage to provide 3 no. mews houses.

The proposals make use of the existing building envelope, with the only massing change being the introduction of a row dormer windows on the rear elevation.

The proposed houses comprise of 2 no. two bedroom houses with a floor area of 83.26 sq.m each, across the two floors. The house on the most eastern side of the building comprises of a one bedroom house with a floor area of 66.63 sq.m across the two floors. Whilst this property is noted as being a one bedroom house, it does benefit from an additional room on the upper floor which could be used as a study or a second bedroom.

The houses will retain the predominantly red-brick elevations, albeit the frontage of the building will now include timber cladding where the elevation has been re-designed to remove the current larger timber garage doors for smaller residential doors and windows. The ground floor rear elevation will be altered to include three sets of bi-fold doors, one for each house, which will provide direct access in to each dwelling's rear courtyard.

The roof ridge height will remain the same as existing, but the front of the roof will be reprofiled to comprise of one slope, as opposed to the current two sections to the roof slope. The rear of the roof will be reprofiled to include the dormer windows. It is proposed to finish the roof in a black metal standing seam, and velux windows will be included on the front elevation.

The rear courtyards will be separated by fencing, and a ginnel will be created along the rear of the courtyard fences to ensure each dwelling has direct access to the rear, and Oakwood Cottage has access for maintenance of its side elevation.



Each dwelling will benefit from one designated parking space and a bin store area to the front of each property.

The Applicant

The Applicant, Unearthed, is a local developer who is focused on delivering sustainable, affordable and healthy homes which has underpinned the design approach at Bamford Road.

They seek to develop small, accessible, previously developed sites that would otherwise be overlooked by developers. They specialise in providing open market affordable and sustainable homes that are targeted at first time buyers.

The homes are designed to be sustainable and affordable through realising the maximum development potential of the Site. To ensure liveability and longevity the homes are designed to be compliant with Nationally Described Space Standards and include areas of flexible space to allow the final home to be bespoke to each home owner's needs.

The Applicant is a local developer, who is very knowledgeable about the local housing market and has designed the scheme to address the requirements and issues first time buyers are facing. This is the second Site that the Developer is progressing with, and they would like to roll this approach out to other small scale brownfield sites across Greater Manchester. That is enabling viability on these small windfall sites, whilst delivering a contemporary living space for first time buyers.

Planning Policy Context

The planning policies relevant to the Site and the proposals are set out in the Rochdale Core Strategy (adopted October 2016), Saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (adopted June 2006), Greater Manchester Waste DPD (April 2012), Greater Manchester Minerals DPD (April 2013) and the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (March 2024). From review of these documents the following policies are considered to be applicable to the proposals:

- Core Strategy Policy E2 Increasing jobs and prosperity;
- Core Strategy Policy C1 Delivering the right amount of houses in the right places;
- Core Strategy Policy C3 Delivering the right type of housing;
- Core Strategy Policy P1 Improving image;
- Core Strategy Policy P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage;
- Core Strategy Policy P3 Improving design of new development;
- Core Strategy Policy G1 Tackling and adapting to climate change;
- Core Strategy Policy G2 Energy and new development;
- Core Strategy Policy G4 Protecting Green Belt land;
- Core Strategy Policy G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity;
- Core Strategy Policy G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability;
- Core Strategy Policy T2 Improving accessibility;
- Core Strategy Policy DM1 General development requirements;
- Unitary Development Plan Policy G/D/2 Green Belt;



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- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development;
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-S2: Carbon and Energy;
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-S6: Resource Efficiency;
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development;
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-H2: Affordability of New Housing;
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing;
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-H4: Density of New Housing;
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P1: Sustainable Places;
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-C1: An Integrated Network; and
- Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-C8: Transport Requirements of New Development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and adopted supplementary planning documents must also be given due weight in the planning assessment.

Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

The proposed development will make use of an existing building that has been vacant for a number of years. It is therefore considered to embody sustainable development due to the re-use of a previously developed site that would otherwise remain vacant.

The Site is located wholly in the Green Belt, where development is restricted to protect the character and openness of the Green Belt in accordance with Core Strategy Policy G4 and Unitary Development Plan G/D/2. The built form on the Site will largely remain the same as existing, the main external alterations comprise of the installation of dormer windows on the rear part of the roof of the existing garage, and the formalisation of the parking area to the front of the properties which includes the introduction of soft landscaping. The roof ridge height will remain the same, as such the increase in volume of the existing building is limited to the dormer windows which are positioned on part of the Site that is surrounded on three side by existing built form. The main views that will be impacted by this minor addition are those from the rear of the terrace houses fronting Bamford Road. Ultimately this is a very modest increase in volume of the building that is not considered to be disproportionate to the original size of the building. The proposed development in Green Belt terms is therefore considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt as it complies with the NPPF paragraph 154 criteria c), and therefore also complies with the policy requirements of Core Strategy Policy G4 and Unitary Development Plan G/D/2.

The formalisation of the parking area to the front of the proposed dwellings is also considered to be a betterment, as if the building were to come back into use as a car repair garage the area would most likely be changed to hardstanding. The proposed parking area instead incorporates soft planting and dedicated parking bays, as opposed to ad hoc parking.

In summary the changes to the roof and frontage parking area are considered to be minor and will not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area or landscape around the Site. The proposals therefore comply with Core Strategy Policy P2.



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Loss of a Former Employment Use

The last known use of the building was as a car repairs garage. This is evident on the building by the openings on the front elevation and the pit in the floor of one section of the building. In addition the building is split internally into three sections, each wide enough to drive a car in through the associated opening. When the car repairs use ceased the building was purchased by the former owner of Oakwood Cottage, to assume control of the building and ensure that it did not impact negatively on their residential amenity. This was also to the benefit of the other neighbouring properties of the garage all of which were, and remain in, a residential use. This was a number of years ago, and since then the garage has not been in use, and therefore not been providing any employment opportunities. The change of use of the building will therefore not result in the loss of any existing jobs, but will re-purpose an existing building to a more suitable use given the site context, that is remove a commercial use from a residential part of the Borough.

In commercial terms the Site is also not well suited to today's typical employment occupiers, or mechanics for a number of reasons. The unit is set back and not visible at all from Bamford Road, which would make finding the unit for visitors quite difficult. The operation of the unit would be restricted given its close proximity to existing neighbouring residential properties, and the access is narrow, and not ideal for larger vehicles that support commercial operators. In addition there are much better locations for commercial operators in the Borough which can meet the needs of modern employment operators including Hooley Bridge Mill only 100 metres south of the Site, and the South Heywood Primary Employment Zone which benefits from excellent links to the motorway network. Ultimately the modest loss of employment floorspace that will occur as a result of the proposed development will not have a significant impact on the Borough's employment land availability, and will enable the conversion of an existing building into a use more suitable to its context for the betterment of existing residential neighbours. The proposals are therefore not considered to be contrary to Core Strategy Policy E2.

Benefit of a Future Residential Use

As set out above the proposed change of use from a car repairs garage to a future residential use is considered to be compatible with the Site context.

Core Strategy Policy C1 sets the housing target for the Borough over the plan period at a level of 460 dwellings per year, albeit this has since been superseded and increased twice since adoption of the Core Strategy by National Government's change in the standard methodology and more recently by the adoption of the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Plan, which sets a new annual requirement of 568 dwellings per annum between 2022 and 2025, and 680 dwellings per annum between 2025 and 2030. This is a significant increase in housing in the Borough which should not be considered as a ceiling, but a minimum target to achieve. The proposed development, whilst modest in scale, can provide a modest contribution towards achieving this requirement. The principle of providing new homes at the Site is therefore considered to comply with Core Strategy Policy C1 and Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-H1.

The Application Site is considered to be in an appropriate location for new housing given that the Site is considered to benefit from good accessibility. It is located approximately 1 kilometre north of Heywood Town Centre, so within walking distance, and benefits from an hourly bus service into Heywood and Bury. The Site is therefore in a highly accessible and sustainable location that offers new residents a very real alternative to travel by private



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vehicle only. The nature of the location of the Site therefore means a future residential use would comply with Core Strategy Policies C1 and T2, and Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-C1 and JP-C8.

The density and size of the proposed homes has been informed by the site constraints and context. The building is proposed to be split into three units to reflect the character of the area which predominantly comprises of modest terrace homes. In addition, the garden space for the existing building (the courtyard to the rear) and the frontage area for parking for the unit are both limited in size naturally lending the conversion of the building into three modest size homes. The renovation of the building will be of a high quality to provide high quality family homes and the high density not only reflects the local character but is reflective of the sustainable location in accordance with Core Strategy Policy C3,

Affordable Open Market Homes

The Applicant is seeking to provide sustainable and affordable homes for first time buyers on small previously developed sites across Greater Manchester. They look to do this through identifying previously developed land in accessible locations and developing them to maximise the development potential of the land. The renovation proposed will provide homes that are designed to be contemporary homes that can adapt to the home owners needs through flexible uses of the proposed floorspace as shown on the submitted floor plans, in particular the open plan ground floor.

The homes have been designed to achieve Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) to ensure a suitable amount of space is provided per dwelling. Due to the level differences between the Site at the surrounding area, and the fact that there is limited space around the dwellings available for the homes to be extended in the future the price of the homes will remain fixed relative to local house prices in perpetuity.

The proposed homes are considered to be more attractive to the first time buyer market due to each house comprising of 2 floors of accommodation, the modest courtyards and contemporary frontages of the properties.

The Applicant considers that this modern housing product will fill a gap in the local housing market, notably by providing modern looking homes that will be priced so as to be affordable for first time buyers whilst enabling the viable redevelopment of an otherwise vacant brownfield sites.

Design of the Homes

The proposed homes comprise of a row of three mews houses that are two storeys height, on an otherwise vacant Site.

The design of the homes has been heavily influenced by the existing building that will be renovated to create the houses. All elevations are predominantly red brick, with a black roof. Timber cladding is proposed to the front elevation which will need to be reconfigured due to the existing large doors on this elevation which will be replaced.

The layout of the homes comprises of living accommodation downstairs and bedrooms upstairs. All of the homes achieve Nationally Described Space Standards to ensure a suitable living space is created. As show in the CGIs of the homes submitted with this application they will all be of a high quality finish.



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Overall the design of the homes is considered to reflect the character of the area, but will result in modern homes available to purchase but as set out above will most likely be of interest for first time buyers. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with the design policies of the Local Plan.

Site Design

The proposed homes are configured in a mews style arrangement, fronting the site entrance linking it to Bamford Road. Reorienting the homes this way naturally provides for parking, bins stores and an associated turning circle to the front of the homes, which benefits from overlooking from the new homes, and private garden space to the rear.

One parking space has been provided per dwelling which we consider to be sufficient as the site is in an accessible location. The Site is within walking distance of Heywood Town Centre, and benefits from bus stops on Bamford Road which link the Site to Heywood and Bury.

This application is supported by a swept path analysis and visibility splays to demonstrate that the turning area and access on to Bamford Road are both suitable.

It is noted that the Council Guidance and Standards for Residential Development SPD includes guidance on interface distances that are to be achieved between homes. The proposal falls short of these distances, as it is making use of an existing building. Importantly the surrounding houses, which were built in the early 1900's too also fall well short of the interface distance set out in the guidance. It is clear that the small dense urban grain is a key element of the character of the area, with rear yards ranging from 3-7 metres along Bamford Road. Moreover Oakwood Cottage, to the rear of the Application Site, has no windows overlooking the site but for a hallway window at ground floor, albeit this will be blocked from overlooking the Site by way of the rear fencing for the proposed dwellings' boundary fences. Therefore whilst the interface distances and rear yards are limited in length this maintains part of the character of the area, and will enable the reuse of an otherwise vacant garage.

Ecological and Arboricultural Considerations

Whilst the Site comprises principally of bare ground and an existing building, it is acknowledged that there is an area of bramble scrub and modified grassland along the eastern side of the Site. These habitats will be removed from Site as part of the proposed development.

The area of these habitats exceeds 25 square metres and therefore the loss of this as part of the proposed development has triggered the need for a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. This report, together with the associated Statutory Biodiversity Metric accompany this application. These assessments set out that the proposals will result in the loss of 0.03 habitat units, due to the removal of the existing bramble and grass areas. There is no space available on-site to compensate for this loss and provide a 10% increase in biodiversity net gain, therefore as set out in the submitted Assessments this will be compensated for by way of purchasing off-site habitat units from a third party habitat bank in due course. This approach is considered to be appropriate given the small scale of the Site in a densely developed area, where development should be concentrated to ensure an efficient use of land. The proposed are therefore considered to comply with Core Strategy Policy G7 and Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-G8.



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As the building is currently vacant this application is also supported by a Bat Survey Report. As set out in this report the Site whilst no evidence of bats was found on Site it was assessed as having high bat roost potential. This application submission will therefore be supported by the requisite bat surveys throughout the determination period to ensure the proposals are not contrary to Core Strategy Policy G7 and Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-G8.

Summary and Conclusion

This application is seeking planning permission for the change of use of the former car repairs garage adjacent to Oakwood Cottage, off Bamford Road in Heywood, to 3 no. new dwellings, together with associated external alterations.

The Site is a previously developed plot of land that is located in a primarily residential area, with residential dwellings surrounding the Site. As such the principle of a future residential use of the Site is considered to be appropriate, sustainable and compliant with the policies set out in the Core Strategy and Places for Everyone Plan.

This is the second scheme that the Applicant is bringing forward for development. Their model focuses on bringing forward small previously developed parcels of land in accessible locations, such as the Site, to provide modern and sustainable homes targeted at first time buyers. This approach is inherent in the scheme through the reuse of the existing building, provision of good quality homes that meet Nationally Described Space Standards and attractive homes. The layout and appearance of the proposed development has due regard to the surrounding character whilst incorporating modern design features such as the building frontage.

In summary the proposals are considered to comply with national and local planning policies. This letter has set out how the proposals comply with local policies, and therefore it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted expeditiously.

I trust the information submitted with the application is appropriate and can be registered and validated expeditiously. If there is anything further that we can assist with, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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