

APPLICATION NUMBER: 23/00867/FUL

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
23/00867/FUL	Rosalind Gralton	26 October 2023

Address: Fieldhouse Industrial Estate Fieldhouse Road Rochdale OL12 0AA

Proposal: Demolition of Units D8, F13 and F14-15 of the Fieldhouse Industrial Estate

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	N

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	N

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N

RECOMMENDATION	APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: LA

DATE: 15/11/2023

SITE

The application relates to units D8, F13 and F14-F15 of Fieldhouse Industrial Estate. Unit 8 is located to the south east of the industrial estate and is a single storey structure. Unit F13 is located to the south west of the industrial estate and is a single storey structure. Unit F12 and units F14-F15 adjoin on to unit F13. F14-F15 adjoins unit F13 and units F8 to F12.

The site is located within the defined urban area, is identified as EC 3 Mixed Employment Zone, just north of Cronkeyshaw Common, a Greenspace Corridor (G/8), and Fieldhouse Industrial Estate (formerly Fieldhouse Mills) is itself a Non Designated Heritage Asset.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for the demolition of units D8, F13 and F14-F15 of Fieldhouse Industrial Estate.

The proposal seeks full demolition of these units only. A previous application for prior notification (22/00361/DEM), was refused 08/09/2022 as the buildings were identified as unsafe and uninhabitable, in addition to the absence of information provided as to whether it was practical to secure safety or health by repair to the building or temporary support.

The application is accompanied by a plan to show how the site will be made good following completion of the demolition works.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1 – To deliver 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

DM1 – General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 – Defined Urban Area
EC/3 – Mixed Employment Zone

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

22/00361/DEM Prior approval for the demolition of units D8, F13 and F14-F15.
Refused 08/09/2022

Reason for refusal: The buildings have been identified as unsafe and uninhabitable. Insufficient information has been provided for the reason building units F13 and F14 - F15 are considered to be unsafe and uninhabitable. Additionally, no details have

been provided as to whether it is practicable to secure safety or health by works of repair or works for affording temporary support. As such the application fails to comply with paragraph B.1 (a) of Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

In light of the above, the proposed demolition does not comprise permitted development under the provisions of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

21/01197/FUL	Demolition of existing buildings and the redevelopment of the site for 206 residential dwellings with associated landscaping and vehicular access from Fieldhouse Road and Whitworth Road - Resubmission of 20/00998/FUL. Application withdrawn.
20/00998/FUL	Demolition of existing buildings and the redevelopment of the site for 206 residential dwellings with associated landscaping and vehicular access from Fieldhouse Road and Whitworth Road. Application withdrawn.
05/D46480	Change Of Use Of Former Mill To Offices Including Installation Of External Staircase To First Floor; New Entrance And Alterations To Existing Ramped Access. Application approved.
89/D23327	Private Garage. Application approved.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways And Engineering

The buildings for demolition are remote from the adopted highway network and are within an existing industrial estate so it would be expected that the site can accommodate the expected internal movements of the demolition plant and vehicles.

It appears that the existing access onto Fieldhouse Road can accommodate the size and number of vehicles expected during the demolition period.

The application includes a Demolition Method Statement which from a highways perspective is acceptable.

The applicant's attention is also drawn to the fact that it is an offence under the Highways Act to allow materials to be deposited on the highway from uncleaned or badly loaded vehicles. The applicant should therefore ensure that adequate measures are in place to prevent mud etc being deposited on Fieldhouse Road and the surrounding highway network.

Conservation And Design

'Fieldhouse Mill was constructed and run by John Bright and Sons, a family business that became fundamental to the growth of the cotton industry within Rochdale. The Bright family business story began when Jacob Bright and two of his associates set

up a business in cotton within the derelict worsted mill, Greenbank Mill, located directly to the South of Fieldhouse Mill. Greenbank Mill became the centre of expansion for the company and in 1839 John Bright, son of Jacob, Liberal Statesman became a principal of John Bright and Sons. Bright's were one of the first companies to install power looms, Howard and Bullough's ring spinning frames and electric lighting and were seen as major innovators of industry within the area.

The business continued to expand and reached its peak during the 1960's when they ran 7 mills for the manufacturing of carpets, tyre cords and belting. Fieldhouse Mill itself was a producer of carpet.

The business went through a compulsory takeover in the late 1970's and Fieldhouse Mill itself was operating as industrial units by 1982.

The main mill building is constructed of red brick with ashlar details and probably has a steel frame. It is an unusual triangular plan shape with 3 storeys, approx. 8 x 10 bays with a projecting corner tower on Whitworth Road south corner. This dominant mill building creates an attractive local landmark which depicts the history and success of the Borough. The main mill building is a prominent feature within the local area, and makes a positive contribution to its character and appearance. Similarly, the other historic buildings within the site, while less prominent in longer views also make important positive contributions to the site and its surrounds.

Fieldhouse Mill can be easily identified on the First Edition O.S. Map, published in 1851 however, it is apparent that its main expansion took place between this time and the publication of the Second Edition O.S. Map in 1894. During the mid-20th century one of the original mill buildings was demolished and a number modern industrial units were erected within the site. Some the existing weaving sheds and buildings were clad with modern materials and finishes for their repurposing.

Whilst the site includes some modern units, the remaining original mill buildings are identified as non-designated heritage assets due to their age, architectural values and historical interests. The provisions of NPPF paragraph 203 apply. This confirms that the impact of a development on a non-designated heritage asset is a material planning consideration. A balanced judgement is required, having regard to the significance of the asset and the scale of any harm or loss. Rochdale CS policy P2 also applies. Mills are key heritage assets for the purposes of this policy.

The proposal is for the demolition of three buildings within Fieldhouse Industrial Estate. These are ancillary buildings. It is understood that no works are proposed to the main mill buildings.

Building D8 is a modern portal structure, dating from the mid-20th century and is not of any heritage significance. There is no objection to its removal.

Building F13 is a single storey structure, with Flemish bond red brickwork and a slate roof with a half hip detail. A change in brickwork indicates that the building has undergone some alterations since its original construction. The building is first depicted on the 1910 OS map.

Immediately adjacent to F13 is building F14-15. This is another brick built structure. It is two storey with a flat roof. It is first depicted on the Ordnance survey map from 1939.

The submitted heritage statement speculates that F13 may have been a loading shed, based on its proximity to sidings from the Facit Branch Line. It is also speculated that F14/F15 would have supported operations within the spinning mills.

Buildings F13 and F14 date from the early 20th century and are indicative of the growth and operations of the mill during this period. They also hold some group value and make some contribution to the significance of the complex as a whole. It is also acknowledged that the buildings have undergone a number of changes, some of which unsympathetic, and that this has resulted in a loss of legibility and historic fabric.

The demolition of these buildings would result in some harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. The level of harm is considered to be less than substantial. This is a material consideration and should be taken into account in the planning balance. This harm needs to be balanced against other factors, including public safety concerns and the conclusions of the building report. It would be helpful to understand what they are proposing to replace the existing buildings with.

If officers are minded to approve the application, a condition should be imposed requiring more details of proposed landscaping/making good works once the demolition works are completed. Any proposals for new buildings on the site would need to be high quality and sympathetic to the historic context and fabric. It is noted that GMAAS have been consulted and have not requested building recording works in this instance.'

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

Thank you for consulting GMAAS on this application.

GMAAS responded to a previous application at this site (21/01197/FUL) in August 2021, which was supported by an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) and Heritage Statement (HS), both produced by Lanpro in 2019. That application proposed the demolition of all buildings on site and development of a housing estate, but has since been withdrawn. The current application is much scaled-back, with localised demolition to just a small number of structures within the estate. It is supported by a Covering Letter (also submitted as a Heritage Statement) (CL/HS), produced by Euan Kellie Property Solutions in August 2023.

The primary archaeological interest at the site is the former Fieldhouse Cotton Mill, a non-designated heritage asset with an entry on the Historic Environment Record (HER 5068.1.0). It was originally established in the 1830s but underwent a number of phases of development in the 19th and 20th centuries with further buildings added and expansion of the estate.

The CL/HS refers to the buildings proposed for demolition as Units F13, F14, F15 and D8. Unit D8 is of no archaeological, historical, architectural or any other heritage interest and will not be considered further in this response. Units F13, F14 and F15 do retain some historic fabric and have some group value with the wider site due to their association with the mill. However, the photographs in the supporting 'Site Condition Photographs' document (September 2023), show the poor condition of the structures, the nature of later alterations to the buildings and the general lack of any original fixtures or fittings of interest.

The photographs could be regarded as constituting the equivalent of a very basic Historic England Level 1 building survey, and the condition of the buildings would probably preclude any further detailed recording. The early 20th century date of the structures also reduces their interest with regard to the workings and development of the mill, so their potential to inform on research avenues in the North West Historic Environment Research Framework is also negligible.

On this basis **there is no archaeological reason to seek to impose any archaeological requirements upon the applicant.** However, if further applications come forward for this site GMAAS would appreciate being consulted as the wider site does retain above and below ground archaeological interests.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

'Summary

The developer's ecological consultant identified no significant ecological issues. Issues relating to bats, nesting birds and biodiversity enhancement measures can be resolved via condition and or informative.

Bats

A valid bat report has been provided. No evidence of bats roosting was identified following a day time assessment and one dusk survey, with very low levels of bat activity on the site. Given the state of the buildings, I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. No further information or measures are required.

Nesting Birds

There is no mention of nesting birds being associated with any of the buildings proposed for demolition, though scrub appears to be present to the rear of some of the buildings with mature trees also overhanging these buildings potential bird nesting habitat. All British birds nests and eggs (with certain limited exceptions) are protected by Section 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended. I recommend a condition along the following lines be applied to any permission.

No works to trees or shrubs shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the LPA.

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Section 174 of the NPPF 2021 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The only likely adverse ecological effect is loss of bird nesting habitat and very small areas of widespread habitat associated with disturbed ground. As mitigation, I recommend provision of a couple of bird boxes on retained buildings adjacent to or on trees in the park to the east. The details can be conditioned.'

Environmental Control (Landfill Gas)

'No objection to the proposals'

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage

'I have looked at the information regarding demolishing of the buildings, including the location plan of the buildings to be demolished. I see no need to apply a Drainage Condition to this application.'

Env Health - Air Quality

No comments received to date

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No comments received to date

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification and site notice. No responses were received.

ANALYSIS

The site is located within the Defined Urban Area, and is designated as a Mixed Employment Zone under saved UDP Policy EC/3.

Policies E2 and E3 relate to ensuring a sufficient supply of suitable buildings to support the creation and retention of successful businesses and focus employment development in areas which offer high quality sites with good access to motorway network and public transport facilities.

There are no Core Strategy policies restricting the building from demolition. The units to be demolished are clearly in a state of disrepair, considered unsafe and uninhabitable. It is evident from this they have not contributed to employment floorspace for a substantial period of time. Given the proposed units to be demolished are within the wider Fieldhouse Industrial Estate, of which is to be retained and not proposed to change of use, it is not considered the proposals would have an unacceptable impact on the supply of employment land in the borough.

Heritage and design

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states *'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'*

Whilst Fieldhouse Industrial Estate includes some modern units, the remaining original mill buildings are identified as non-designated heritage assets due to their age, architectural values and historical interests. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF is therefore relevant to this assessment, in addition to Core strategy Policy P2.

All three buildings proposed are ancillary to the main mill building. Building D8 is a modern portal structure, dating from the mid-20th century and is not of any heritage significance. The Council's Conservation Officer has no objection to its removal. Additionally, GMAAS have been consulted on the application and have no objections with the scheme, and state there are no archaeological issues with the identified buildings removal.

The Council's Conservation Officer notes buildings F13 and F14 date from the early 20th century and are indicative of the growth and operations of the mill during this period. They hold some group value and make some contribution to the significance of the complex as a whole. It is also acknowledged that the buildings have undergone a number of changes, some of which unsympathetic, and that this has resulted in a loss of legibility and historic fabric.

As a result, the demolition of these buildings would result in some harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. The level of harm is considered to be less than substantial. Given the proposed public safety concerns of the building report, and the reason for demolition, it is considered the proposal would, on balance, be considered acceptable. The units comprise a small section of the wider building. The applicant has stated the proposal would offer more circulation space within the site.

It is noted the Conservation Officer requested a condition regarding an updated plan providing more details including landscaping. A condition is secured ensuring that land left over as a result of demolition is hard surfaced, and works to make good the external wall to buildings F8-12. It is considered the concerns raised by the

Conservation Officer can be adequately covered by this condition given the industrial nature of the site.

Highway Safety

Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to improve accessibility by locating development where good access to public transport is available or can be provided and in all circumstances, prioritises the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area. Policy DM1 also states that all development proposals should provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location. Paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework 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 would be severe.

The Council's Highways Engineers were consulted on the application and accept the Demolition Method Statement. It is noted the building are remote from the adopted highway network and are within an existing industrial estate so it would be expected that the site can accommodate the expected internal movements of plant and vehicles. Highways note that adequate measures are in place to prevent mud being deposited on Fieldhouse Road and the surrounding highway network.

No conditions are proposed and no objections are raised It is considered the proposal is compliant with Policies DM1 and T2 of the adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Ecology

Policy G6 of the adopted Core Strategy expects development proposals affecting green infrastructure to avoid the loss of existing features such as trees unless suitable alternative provision is made or they have limited value. Core Strategy Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

It is noted that no evidence of bat roosting was identified, and therefore no further information or measures relating to bats are required. The Council's Ecological consultant recommends a condition regarding any removal or works to trees or shrubs in the interest of protection of birds nests and eggs.

The Council's Ecologist finds that the only likely adverse ecological effect is loss of bird nesting habitat as a result of the demolition. This can be mitigated for by the installation of bird boxes on buildings that are to be retained within the site. This can be secured by condition.

Subject to conditions, officers are satisfied that the proposed demolition is compliant with policies G6 and G7.

Drainage

Policy G8 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to ensure that new development does not lead to any form of increased flooding locally or further downstream, does not impede natural water and flood risk management, is not detrimental to existing or potential flood storage areas, contributes where possible to alleviating existing flood risk.

The site falls within Flood Zone 1, and is subsequently considered to be at low risk of flooding. The drainage officer offers no comments.

Ground Conditions

Core Strategy Policy G9 states that the Council will ensure that any risks arising from contaminated land or land instability are identified, and that any appropriate actions to address these risks are taken, prior to works taking place.

The Environmental Protection Officer has been consulted and has no objections to the proposals.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

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:

- Location Plan
- Demolition Plan (Rev A)
- 'Draft Proposed Elevations Planning Drawings' – Dwg No 06 Rev A
- Demolition Method Statement

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and documents 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 saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The development and demolition hereby permitted must be carried out in accordance with 'Demolition Plan (Rev A)' and Demolition Method Statement.

Reason: To minimise the detrimental effects to the environment through risks of pollution during the construction phase in accordance with Policies DM1, G7 and G9 of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. No later than 2 months following commencement of demolition works, details (location and design) of at least 3 bird boxes to be fitted to retained buildings within the application site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The boxes shall be installed no later than 2 months following the Local Planning Authority's approval of the details. The duly approved scheme shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of enhancing biodiversity and habitat provision within the site in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Immediately following demolition works, the land and any exposed external walls shall be made good and surfaced, in accordance with 'Making Good

Plan' submitted to the Council 05/09/2023, with materials and finish to match the existing surface.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in compliance with policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. No clearance of trees and shrubs in preparation for (or during the course of) development shall take place during the bird nesting season (March - August inclusive) unless an ecological survey has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to establish whether the site is utilised for bird nesting. Should the survey reveal the presence of any nesting species, then no development shall take place during the period specified above unless a mitigation strategy has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which provides for the protection of nesting birds during the period of works on site.

Reason: In order to prevent any habitat disturbance to nesting birds in accordance with policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Procedure Statement

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.

Report Author Rosalind Gralton