

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

25/00519/FUL

CASE OFFICER

Rachel Carney/Ryan Killeen

DETERMINATION DATE 08.09.2025 **EXT OF TIME**

Address: Hopwood Hall College Rochdale Campus St Marys Gate Rochdale OL12 6RY

Proposal: Application for enabling works comprising site clearance, site remediation, archaeological investigations, temporary means of access(es) and temporary means of enclosure and associated works in order to prepare the site for redevelopment

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

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/A

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT STC
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: Melanie Hale **DATE:** 30th July 2025

SITE

The application relates to Hopwood Hall College which is located to the west of Rochdale town centre and to the outside (west) of St Mary's Gate, on the corner with College Road. The college currently comprise two main buildings which front onto St Mary's Gate, with off street parking located to the rear and accessed via College Road. The College is also bounded to the south by the River Roch, where Rochdale Sixth Form College and a large Asda store are located.

The site is overlooked from the north by social housing at College Bank, in the "Seven Sisters", seven high-rise blocks of flats. To the east of the site, to the opposite side of St Mary's Gate, sits Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for advanced enabling works related to wider aspiration to provide a new college building on the site, in replacement of one the existing buildings. A separate full application has been submitted.

These early enabling works include standard preparatory works to ready and de-risk the site for future development. These works comprise the provision of heras fencing, disconnecting of existing lighting columns, site set up on car par, excavation and removal of tarmac and coal tar, removal of asbestos, excavation to depth of 2m, crushing of excavated material, laying of 65 capping – foundation pad, removal from site of all excavated material, install temporary electrical connections, archaeological watching and briefing.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

- G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land stability
- DM1 General Development Requirement

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

- G/D/1 Defined Urban Area
- G/R/1 Physical Regeneration

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

09/D51738 - Screening Opinion In Respect Of Proposed Redevelopment Of Rochdale College - Determined

09/D51750 - Erection Of New 7 Storey College Building With Associated Parking - Approved
10/D53657 - Installation Of Two Awnings Fronting St Mary's Gate - Approved
11/D54025 - Installation Of 2 Awnings. (Additional To Two On Planning Application 10/D53657) - Approved
12/D55197 - Construction Of A New Car Park And Associated Landscape Treatment. - Approved
24/00128/FUL - Installation of cycle shelter - Approved
25/00541/FUL - Demolition and site clearance of existing Teaching Block B and outbuildings and Erection of New Teaching Building (Use Class F1), repair and alterations to retained teaching buildings, revised means of access, car parking, cycle parking, drainage, infrastructure, landscaping and ancillary works - Undetermined

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways And Engineering

No objection

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No comments received to date

Tree Officer

No comments received to date

Canal And River Trust

Confirmed no requirement to consult

United Utilities

Suggested drainage condition

Environment Agency

Summary: The development will meet the NPPF's requirements in relation to flood risk if a condition is included requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the submitted FRA

Transport For Greater Manchester

No comments received to date

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

The desk based assessment concludes that the site has high potential to contain archaeological remains of interest and warrants further investigation. Requested that a programme of archaeological investigation be secured through condition.

Sport England

No application specific comments provided. General advice given in accordance with the NPPF.

Joint Committee Of National Amenity Societies

Gardens Trust

Do not wish to comment on the proposals at this stage.

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage

Drainage has been removed from the application. The FRA is acceptable subject to comments from the Environment agency.

Environmental Control (Landfill Gas)

No comments received to date

The Coal Authority

No objections

Gtr Manchester Ecology Unit

As the application site is a car park and is all hardstanding there are no habitats on site. The only ecological issue would be to protect the River Roch during works.

Agree that the enabling works would be exempt from BNG.

Health And Safety Executive - (Haz Sub Consents)

No comments received to date

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised with a site notice, press notice and neighbour notification letters. No representations have been received.

ANALYSIS

Heras Fencing

2.4m high heras fencing is proposed around the development site and this would be set inside the site, at the lower site level. The provision of substantial means of enclosure is customary in relation to construction site, with such fencing often not requiring planning permission due to its temporary nature. Nonetheless, examining the details submitted it is considered that transparent nature of the fencing would ensure that it does not appear too prominent on the site, whilst providing suitable measures to protect the site as well as the safety of any passing pupils of the college and members of the public.

The provision of similar means of enclosure is customary in relation to construction sites, with heras fencing of the type proposed, being a common method of securing sites. While it is accepted that the present site is prominent, being on a major town centre street and adjacent to listed buildings. As a temporary measure that would be removed after construction, the heras fencing as detailed is considered to be acceptable.

Access and highway safety

The submitted Construction Management Plan and Construction Traffic Management Plan details that access to the site will be via the existing route to the car park, via St Marys Gate and that there will be a manned gate in place to manage the access. An emergency vehicular gate will also be installed to the east of the site but this will only be used in an emergency. The Highway Authority have confirmed no objections to the access arrangements and traffic management plan and no conditions are requested.

Ecology and Trees

GMEU have confirmed that as the application site is a car park and is all hardstanding, that there are no habitats on site. Additionally, it has been confirmed that the site would be exempt from BNG requirements.

GMEU have advised that the River Roch will need to be protected during construction and that this should be controlled through a Construction Environmental Management Plan. It is noted that the submitted Construction Management Plan and Construction Traffic Management Plan details a riparian fencing zone to ensure no encroachment into the river zone, with confirmation that this will be recorded daily on an environmental report and checked daily. In addition, any site lighting will be directed downwards to ensure no disturbance to light sensitive receptors and gaps will be left below hoardings to ensure wildlife is able to traverse the site. Finally, mobile plant and equipment will be stored on nappy pads to reduce the likelihood of contamination, with weekly inspections on the site habitats. This is considered to satisfy GMEU's requirements, ensuring adequate protection to the River Roch and surrounding habitats.

A tree survey has been submitted and this, alongside the case officer site observations, demonstrate that there are no trees to be affected around the area of the proposed enabling works. The tree survey identifies that all the trees within the college site are sited to the west of the enabling works, with no action to the trees required in order to implement the development.

Ground Works and Archaeology

The application has been supported by reports with regards to land contamination and archaeology. The councils Environmental Health Officer and the Environment Agency have agreed with the site investigation reports conclusions and recommendations of further works which can be readily accommodated through a planning condition to any permission.

Similarly, GMAAS have agreed that a programme of archaeological works shall be undertaken in line with the submitted watching brief and the project design. This can be secured through a planning condition.

Drainage

The application site is located adjacent to the River Roch and within flood zones 2 and 3.

Through consideration of the application drainage works have been removed from the description of development and with this the Council's Drainage Officer has confirmed that the enabling works proposals are acceptable from a drainage perspective, with no concerns over the submitted Flood Risk Assessment.

Given the site's location partially within Flood Zones 2 & 3, it is the proposals are required to fulfil the requirements of the NPPF in relation to Flood Risk, and the supporting FRA assesses potential risk to people and property, including any off-site impacts. The FRA notes a number of measures to ensure that the site remains safe including the use of flood evacuation warnings, proper briefing on evacuation procedures, safe access and egress routes even in the event of flood, and suitable siting of stored materials and welfare cabins. The Environment Agency have reviewed the application and the supporting FRA and have concluded that the development meets the requirements of the NPPF subject to the attachment of a condition requiring development to be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the FRA.

In respect of the sequential test, the development would pass this on the basis of the highly specific locational requirements for the development, in that the proposals are serving Hopwood Hall College's Rochdale Campus, thus cannot be located anywhere other than within the site.

The exceptions test is also passed in light of the recommendations outlined within the FRA and the clear sustainability benefits associated with the development through the provision of much enhanced learning facilities.

United Utilities (UU) have also commented and raised no objection to the enabling works. However, they have requested a pre-commencement condition that would require details of a surface and foul water drainage scheme, the details of which they have requested be implemented prior to occupation.

As detailed above, this is an enabling works application that would allow for site clearance, with the detailed scheme, that being for the development of a new college building, submitted under a separate application 25/00541/FUL. Given the scope of this application it is reasonable that full drainage details would not be provided at this site clearance stage. Furthermore, it would be impossible to implement the requested details prior to occupation, as there is no scheme to occupy. As such, whilst sustainable drainage is recognised as being an important consideration in the development of sites, in this instance, it is not considered reasonable to apply the condition as requested by UU.

Neighbour amenity

The site is within an urban location and there is likely to be some loss of amenity to neighbouring property/occupiers, in particular by reason of noise and disturbance from construction work, as would be expected at any similar development site. This would be a temporary imposition and would not be to an unacceptable degree provided suitable mitigation measures are put in place in a package of construction management measures which can be controlled by planning condition, with a further condition controlling the hours to those requested by Environmental Services, that being 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday; 9.00am to 2.00pm on Saturday.

Conclusion

Taking into account all of the above considerations and subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant Core Strategy policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION

1 Time Limit

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 Plans

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

- Site Plan Red Line– Drawing no. FE0012-SRA-XX-XX-D-A-0205 Rev P01
- Site Plan Red & Blue Lines – Drawing no. FE0012-SRA-XX-XX-D-A-0206 Rev P01
- Logistics ref. HOP/LOG-02
- Project Design: Evaluation & Watching Brief – Ref. 61082/01
- Remediation Strategy – Ref. KL21085-C1-RMS
- Asbestos Management Plan – Ref. LKR241014
- Construction Methodology Plan and Logistics Proposal – Rev 1
- Enabling Works – Scope Summary (Extent of Heras Fencing)
- Anti-climb Mesh Fence Panel - Drawing no TF2504 Revision C
- Construction Management Plan & Construction Traffic Management Plan – received by the Local Planning Authority on 30/07/2025

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 Remediation

The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the remediation strategies outlined in the documents “Asbestos Management Plan and Risk Assessment For Asbestos Impacted Soils” ref. LKR241014 dated 21st July 2025 and “Remediation Strategy & Build Phase Verification Plan” ref. LKC251085 rev. 1 dated 23rd July 2025.

Following completion of the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme and prior to first use/occupation of the approved development, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in full accordance with the duly approved remediation strategy thereafter. Prior to the first use or occupation of the approved development, a verification report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the safe development of the site in the interests of the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4 Hoarding and Fencing

Prior to the first commencement of development, site hoarding and fencing of the site shall be erected in accordance with the details identified on the Enabling

Works – Scope Summary (Extent of Heras Fencing) and on drawing no TF2504 Revision C (Anti-climb Mesh Fence Panel). The hoarding/fencing shall be retained throughout the enabling development works.

Reason: To make the site safe and secure and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies P2 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

5 Archaeology

A programme of archaeological work shall be undertaken in line with the Hopwood Hall College Project Design for an Evaluation and Watching Brief (dated April 2025) and within 6 months of the date of this permission and report of the findings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works will be undertaken in accordance with the agreed Project Design, which covers the following:

1. A phased programme and methodology to include:
 - a) an archaeological evaluation;
 - b) an archaeological watching brief;
 - b) pending the results of the above, a targeted open-area excavation carried out in accordance with an updated Project Design.
2. A programme for post-investigation assessment to include:
 - a) analysis of the site investigation records and finds;
 - b) production of a final report on the significance of the heritage interest recorded.
3. Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.
4. Dissemination of the results of the site investigation commensurate with their significance.
5. Provision for archive deposition of the report, finds and records of the site investigation.
6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved Project Design.

Reason: To protect the significance of any archaeological remains on the site in accordance with Policy P2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, and Policy 218 of the National Planning Policy Framework

6 Construction Management Plan

Unless specified by other conditions, the development shall be carried out in full accordance with the Construction Management Plan & Construction Traffic Management Plan, prepared by Willmott Dixon and received by the Local Planning Authority on 30/07/2025.

Reason: In order to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to limit noise, nuisance and disturbance to the adjacent premises and users during the works, protect adjacent habitats and manage traffic to and from the site in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy G9, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

7 Flood Risk Assessment

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment ref FE0012-ROS-XX-XX-T-D-0051 P02 July 2025. For the avoidance of doubt this includes the following mitigation measures:

- Finished floor levels (cabins / welfare) shall be set no lower than 119.58 + 0.57 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- Ensure no raising or lowering of ground levels beyond Reason existing topographic levels ref FE0012-ROS-XX-XX-D-C-01100 P01.

Reason: In the interest of providing a safe environment in the event of a flood and to prevent an increased risk of flooding further downstream and 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.

Procedure Statement

The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.

Notes for Applicant:

INFORMATIVE - Flood Warning

The applicant/occupants should phone Floodline on 0345 988 1188 to register for a flood warning, or visit <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>. It's a free service that provides warnings of flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater, direct by telephone, email or text message. Anyone can sign up.

Flood warnings can give people valuable time to prepare for flooding - time that allows them to move themselves, their families and precious items to safety. Flood warnings can also save lives and enable the emergency services to prepare and help communities.

For practical advice on preparing for a flood, visit <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding>.

To get help during a flood, visit <https://www.gov.uk/help-during-flood>.

For advice on what to do after a flood, visit <https://www.gov.uk/after-flood>.