

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
23/00420/FUL	Claire Ringwood	19 th March 2024

Address: Ronald Gorton Centre, Castlemere Street, Rochdale, OL11 3SW

Proposal: Conversion of existing building to form Training and Product Research & Development Facility with associated office space (Use Classes E(g)(i) & E(g)(ii)) together with replacement or repaired fenestration details (re-submission of 22/00403/FUL

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

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?	Y

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

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT subject to conditions
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY:
21.03.24

LA

DATE:

SITE

The application relates to the former Ronald Gorton Centre, located on Castlemere Street. The site was originally in use as a community facility but was closed to the public and is currently used for the storage of desks and office equipment. The site consists of a predominately single storey flat roofed building although there is a 2.5 storey element to the centre of the building. There is a large car parking area to the north.

The surrounding area includes a variety of uses, with terrace residential properties on Castlemere Street to the east, a martial arts studio and restaurant to the north-east of the site further along Castlemere Street. Directly to the north of the car parking area is a grass verge leading down to Drake Street. To the northwest of the site there is a converted red brick structure which has been divided into four individual units which largely appear to all fall within Class E. To the west of the site is an urban football pitch and residential flats. Finally to the south of the site is a three-storey block of flats, as well as the Castlemere Banqueting Hall. This hall is considered a non-designated heritage asset.

The site is within the Defined Urban Area.

PROPOSAL

The application is for the change of use to a commercial facility that would provide training and research space including multiple offices, storage rooms, staff rooms, product display areas and kitchen and bathroom areas. The amended DAS states the general day to day use of the building is the training of new and existing staff, research of new products, product photography and marketing studios as well as business expansion research and development offices. Products proposed to be brought to the building will be used for research and photography for the website and consist mainly of clothing and footwear.

The proposal looks to retain the majority of the internal layout however, the existing internal courtyard is to be infilled to create additional office and meeting space. The existing ramped access to the front of the building is to remain.

Originally the proposal involved recladding the building however, following concerns from the Council's Conservation Officer the proposal was amended and the only external works include:

- Replacement glazing units including bottom panels, new windows and panels to match the existing colours;
- Repair / replacement timber eaves slats finished in lime / sage green as existing. Eaves slats to be inspected and areas that can be retained are to be stripped of paint and repainted;
- Re-render external façade to the front elevation in white to match the existing;
- All existing brickwork to be acid cleaned;
- Existing flat roof inspected and repaired / replaced as needed in a matching material and colour;
- Existing roller shutter boxes and shutters repaired / replaced as needed.

The proposed opening hours would be Monday-Friday 8:00-18:00 and Saturday 9:30-13:30 (secure by condition).

The amended Design and Access Statement (received 21st November 2023) refers to the total number of staff as between 20-35 with 2-4 visitors expected per day.

Access into the site will remain as existing leading to a large car parking area to the north. The site parking area is shared in a small capacity with 211 Drake Street with 3 existing parking bays located to the north west of the site allocated to 211 Drake Street, the shared parking arrangements also allows shared access to the car park off Castlemere Street.

Additional parking is provided to the west of the existing building with a total of 2 new parking bays and 10 new disabled parking bays. The new parking bays combined with the existing parking layout totals 63 parking spaces (there is a discrepancy in the numbering on Drawing No: 21.2592.2K – Proposed Site Plan, received 21st November 2023 which states 64 parking spaces however, number 46 is missing). An existing drop off area is located to the east off Castlemere Street which is to be retained as existing.

Independent management of the car park is to be maintained with the larger parking area maintained by the owners of the building and the 3 parking bays associated with 211 Drake Street maintained separately.

Cycle parking is proposed to an area in the car park to include 10 Sheffield Hoops (secure by condition).

Bin storage is proposed to the north east corner of the site which includes a 1.8m high timber close boarded fence to accommodate 6 bins (secure by condition).

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

Photo Image

Received 28th April 2023

Site Location Plan

Drawing No: 21.2592.1B – Existing Site Plan

Drawing No: 21.2592.2G – Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: 21.2592.10A – Existing Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: 21.2592.11A – Existing Sections

Drawing No: 21.2592.12A – Existing Elevations

Drawing No: 21.2592.13G – Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: 21.2592.14D – Proposed Elevations

Drawing No: 21.2592.15 – Existing Sections 3-3 & 4-4

Drawing No: 21.2592.16D – Proposed Elevations 2

Drawing No: 21.2592.17A – Proposed Sections 3-3 & 4-4

Drawing No: 21.2592.18A – Existing And Proposed Street Scenes

Design and Access Statement

Received 20th June 2023

Drawing No: 21.2592.1C – Existing Site Plan

Drawing No: 21.2592.2J – Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: 21.2592.10B – Existing Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: 21.2592.11A – Existing Sections

Drawing No: 21.2592.12A – Existing Elevations

Drawing No: 21.2592.13H – Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: 21.2592.14E – Proposed Elevations

Drawing No: 21.2592.15 – Existing Sections 3-3 & 4-4

Drawing No: 21.2592.16E – Proposed Rear and Side Elevations

Drawing No: 21.2592.17B – Proposed Sections 3-3 & 4-4

Drawing No: 21.2592.18B – Existing And Proposed Street Scenes

Drawing No: 21.2592.19A – Proposed Works

Design and Access Statement

Noise Impact Assessment by Soundscape, dated 15th September 2023, Report – RE1 – 23- 1057

Transport Statement by Sanderson Associates Consulting Engineers, Project Ref: 154951, Issue: 01, Date: June 2023
28th September 2023

Drawing No: 21.2592.2K – Proposed Site Plan
Design and Access Statement
21st November 2023

Preliminary Roost Assessment by Arbtech Consulting Limited
Received 24th January 2024

Transport Statement by Sanderson Associates Consulting Engineers, Project Ref: 154951, Issue: 02 (issue date 27.11.2023), Date: June 2023
Received 25th January 2024

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
SO2	Creating successful and healthy communities
C6	Improving health and well being
C8	Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities
SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P3	Improving design of new development
SO4	Promoting a greener environment
G8	Managing water resources and flood risk
G9	Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability
SO5	Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
T2	Improving accessibility

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

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

Places for Everyone (PfE)

PfE is a joint Development Plan Document being prepared by nine Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan). It identifies the quantum of new housing and employment development, supports the delivery of key infrastructure, and protects

environmental assets. The Inspectors' Report, received on 14 February 2024, marks the end of the examination into the plan which included public hearing sessions which took place between 1 November 2022 and 5 July 2023. The report sets out the findings of the examination of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (PfE). The Inspectors conclude that all legal requirements have been met and that with the recommended main modifications set out in the Appendix of their report, the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan satisfies the requirements referred to in Section 20(5)(a) of the 2004 Act and is sound.

The next step is for all nine Places for Everyone Councils to consider the Inspectors' recommendations and adoption of the Plan. Consequently, the plan is at a very advanced stage and has been deemed to be legally sound and is therefore afforded significant weight in decision making.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

22/00403/FUL - Conversion of existing building to form commercial storage facility (Class B8), first floor extension, two storey rear extension, increase in eaves and ridge height, alterations to fenestration and cladding to all elevations. Refused 31/01/2023.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

RBC Estates

The Council still owns RGC. We are in the process of disposing subject to planning permission.

Environmental Health (Noise)

I have reviewed the report and can give the following comment:

This section has no objection in principle to the proposals, to fully protect existing noise sensitive receptors we would recommend a condition requiring the mitigation measures are implemented as documented in the noise impact assessment –

- ② Replacement window and door frames fitted and sealed in accordance with specification;
- ② Increased insulation to existing roof void / internal MF suspended ceiling.

GMEU / Trees

Initial Comments

Summary

A bat and bird assessment is recommended prior to determination. There are unlikely to be any other significant ecological issues associated with this site.

Bats

Species such as common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) most commonly occur in houses and prefer confined roost sites, such as soffit boxes, eaves or under hanging tiles. The most common roosts are found between underfelt and boards or tiles, and inside cavity walls. Based on streetview the existing timber cladding could provide potential roosting opportunities and whilst an urban location, there are records of bat roosts from the locality. Current guidance states it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected

by the proposed development is established before the planning permission is granted otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision (UK Government Guidance within the ODPM Government Circular 06/2005).

I therefore recommend that:

Prior to determination a bat assessment is carried out by a suitably experienced bat worker. The assessment should include as a minimum a visual inspection of the existing roof space for evidence of bats and exterior of the building for potential bat access points. Should the property be assessed as more than low risk, further information will be required prior to determination.

Nesting Birds

Trees and shrubs appear to be present around the building potential bird nesting habitat. It is unclear whether these are to be retained or removed. The building may also provide bird nesting opportunities, though it appears very low risk. As part of the bat assessment we would recommend an assessment for nesting birds. Dependent on the finding a condition or informative may be required.

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 site generally has very low ecological value.

Any loss of trees and shrubs should be mitigated, with mitigation/enhancement for nesting birds and bats also recommended. The detail can likely be conditioned, once clarification on bats, birds and whether or not trees and shrubs will be removed has been provided.

Updated Comments

My reason for recommending a bat assessment was because the applicant mentioned re-roofing. If this is still required then yes I would still recommend a bat assessment prior to determination.

Final Comments

Bats

A valid bat report has been provided. No evidence of bats was found and the building assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. Trees on the site were also assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. I recommend an informative along the following lines is applied to any permission.

Whilst the building to be converted has been assessed as negligible risk for bats, the applicant is reminded that under the 2019 Regulations it is an offence to disturb, harm or kill bats. If a bat is found during demolition all work should cease immediately and a suitably licensed bat worker employed to assess how best to safeguard the bat(s).

Nesting Birds

The building was assessed as suitable for nesting birds. Trees and shrubs are also present on the site. All British bird's 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 or demolition commence 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 & Biodiversity Net Gain

Section 180 of the NPPF states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The site is primarily building and hardstanding. Post development some soft landscaping is indicated. Wildlife issues appear restricted to nesting birds. With regards biodiversity net gain, there appears to be less than 25sqm of vegetation lost. I am therefore satisfied that the development would be exempt from biodiversity net gain if it were mandatory. I am satisfied that the details of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement can be dealt with via condition.

Conservation Officer

The application site consists of a predominately single storey flat roof building on Castlemere Street in Rochdale. The building occupies the site of a former church, immediately to the south of the site, the associated Sunday School, dating from the late 19th to early 20th century remains, now Castlemere Banqueting Hall. This former Sunday School is constructed of coursed stone with a slate roof and retains original features, such as the arched windows along the front elevation. It is of some architectural and historic interest, and has been considered as a non-designated heritage asset.

The existing building on the application site is not of any particular architectural or historic merit. Overall, its proportions, architectural design and materials make it an anomaly in the streetscene, which is predominately red brick (with some exceptions, including the Sunday School), two storey and with more compact plan forms. However, its low height means that it is not an overly dominant feature within the streetscene.

The current proposal follows on from a previous refusal for the conversion and upwards extension of the existing building (22/00403/FUL refers).

The revised scheme no longer proposes an upwards extension and the existing form of the building would be retained. A stone plinth is proposed with new cladding above. The proposed use of stone is welcomed. This should be a natural local stone.

I am not wholly convinced by the proposed cladding. I would suggest that this is revisited and alternative cladding solutions are looked at. In any case, a sample of materials should be provided as a condition.

There are no objections in heritage terms to the new use.

Subject to amendments/clarification regarding the proposed cladding, it is likely that a neutral impact on the adjacent non-designated heritage asset could be achieved.

Updated Comments

It is understood that no changes are proposed to the exterior of the building, other than repairs.

As such, there are no heritage objections

United Utilities

No comments at the time of writing.

Highways

Initial Comments

There are a number of Highway issues arising from this application that will need consideration.

We have assessed the existing use against the proposed use in terms of additional traffic generation and we not expect that there would be any detrimental impact on highway capacity.

Although we would expect that the proposed use would generate additional traffic we would not expect that there would be any impact on road safety on the surrounding highway network.

Parking provision for the proposed use would appear to be in line with Council parking standards.

Although the submitted Design and Access Statement makes reference to how the development would be serviced no detail has been provided. We would need to fully assess the servicing requirements of the use in terms of the size of vehicles required to deliver or collect materials. The submitted plans indicate that there is limited internal turning space for larger vehicles therefore we would ask that the applicant submits a Servicing Method Statement for approval.

Subject to the approval of an appropriate Servicing Method Statement Highways would raise no objection to this application.

Updated Comments

Highways have concerns regarding the servicing arrangements as the submitted plans do not seem to be consistent and without adequate internal servicing there would be a detrimental impact on road safety within a mainly residential area.

The recently submitted site plan (21.2592.2J) show a revised site layout including a parking and servicing arrangement. It is clear from this layout that larger service vehicles cannot access the rear of the building without reversing long distances in or out of this site contrary to road safety. Also submitted on the same date is a Transport Statement (TS) produced by Sandersons Transport Consultant which provides swept path analysis for a different site layout which creates some confusion.

The amended Design and Access Statement proposes that the site will be serviced by small transit sized vehicles only which considering modern logistics is not plausible. At the very least we would expect refuse collections at least one visit per week with the bin storage area is to the rear of the building, In contrast the TS shows adequate internal turning facilities for a standard sized refuse collection vehicle which we previously accepted. Even if the site was serviced by a Transit Van sized vehicle only no viable swept path analysis has been provided for to confirm accessibility

Until the servicing issues for this application have been satisfactorily resolved Highways cannot support this application.

Final Comments

I can confirm our concerns have now be resolved and we have no further objection to this application.

TfGM

Colleagues from within TfGM HFAS (Highways Forecasting Analytical Services) have reviewed the Design and Access Statement (DAS) issued in support of the proposed facility and have provided comments.

I. Trip Generation

The trip generation assessment included with the previous application demonstrated that the proposed development is likely to generate 8 two-way flows in the AM peak hour and 4 two-way flows in the PM peak hour.

TfGM would have preferred an updated Transport Statement to be included with this application. However, the previous assessment work demonstrated that the likely number of trips associated with the development would not trigger the requirement for any further assessment work.

II. Proposed Access Arrangements

The DAS confirms that the existing vehicle access on Castlemere Street will be retained and used to serve the development.

The access should be designed to ensure the provision of tactile paving and dropped kerbs. Additionally, any redundant vehicle access points should be reinstated as continuous footway to adoptable standards. This should be ensured by way of planning condition.

The proposed internal layout of the site will need to be designed to accommodate all parking and vehicle manoeuvres associated with the development, to ensure that HGVs can enter and exit the site in a forwards gear, for general safety purposes and to maintain the free flow of traffic along the surrounding routes. It is noted that this is demonstrated within the accompanying swept path drawings.

The DAS outlines that the proposals include 49 parking bays within the site boundary.

TfGM would refer to the LHA if the proposed access, parking and servicing arrangements are acceptable.

III. Traffic Regulation Orders

Site observations have confirmed that Castlemere Street is unrestricted and therefore pavement parking occurs along both sides of the road. TfGM would suggest that a review is undertaken of the Traffic Regulation Orders in the vicinity of the development, with a view to introducing additional parking restrictions as appropriate, as well as ensuring adequate parking restrictions remain in place, and are refreshed accordingly.

This will help to discourage pavement parking associated with the development and therefore assist in improving the quality of the surrounding public realm.

In particular, to review the potential for the introduction of double yellow lines covering the proposed site access, to ensure unobstructed sightline visibility.

IV. Other

A robust Construction Traffic Management Plan should be employed as part of the development to minimise disruption during the construction period.

Site Accessibility

I. Public Transport

The nearest bus stops offering access to regular services are located on Drake Street, around a 2-minute walk from the site. These stops provide regular services between Manchester City Centre and Rochdale every 10 minutes.

Rochdale tram stop and Rochdale train station are both located around a 7-minute walk from the site providing access to further destinations and services.

It is therefore considered that the site benefits from good public transport links and as such staff will be provided with viable alternatives to car travel.

II. Active Travel

In order to encourage walking and cycling, it should be ensured that the pedestrian and cycling environment, within and around the site, is designed to be as safe, attractive and convenient as possible, including natural surveillance where possible. This should provide sufficient links to the surrounding pedestrian and cycle networks.

To promote active travel and link in with the surrounding environment, the applicant should ensure the provision of continuous 2 metre wide footways throughout and surrounding the development, as well as reinstating any redundant vehicle crossings which previously served the site, installing tactile paving at junctions/crossing points and renewing any substandard footways.

In particular, the internal layout should ensure provision of a safe walkway through the car park, with appropriate lighting surrounding the building.

III. Cycle Parking

It is important to ensure that there is adequate infrastructure and facilities to encourage staff to travel by sustainable modes. Cycle parking provision should be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards and where possible spaces in excess of the minimum provided.

The cycle facilities should be covered and secure, with measures such as the installation of CCTV and appropriate lighting to ensure security. Additionally, appropriate welfare facilities (shower/changing rooms/lockers) should be provided for staff to promote and encourage cycling as an alternative to car travel.

IV. Travel Plan

TfGM recommends that a Staff Travel Plan is produced for the development, with the objective of reducing reliance on the private car, particularly single occupancy use. The Travel Plan should be designed to raise awareness of opportunities for reducing travel by car and should feature a range of measures and initiatives promoting a choice of transport mode, and a clear monitoring regime with agreed targets.

The offer of personalised journey planning for staff is a further measure that could be included in the full Travel Plan for the site. The marketing and communication strategy should communicate the Travel Plan objectives and benefits to potential future business or commercial occupiers of the development, prior to them occupying the development. This should ensure potential business and commercial organisations are able to make informed choices and are more likely to commit to and adopt the Travel Plan.

In order to encourage sustainable journeys to mitigate the traffic impact of the development, through the Travel Plan, incentives should be offered to encourage staff to use public transport and active travel modes through measures such as concessionary bus fares, discounted cycles, journey planning etc.

Should Rochdale Council be minded to approve this application it is suggested that a condition for the development, submission, implementation and monitoring of a Staff Travel Plan within 6 months of occupation be attached to any planning consent.

Updated Comments

The TS demonstrates that the quantum of development falls below TfGM's requirement for a highway impact assessment and as such there are no further comments required.

Drainage & Flooding Officer

The additional roof area of the extension to the existing building will be 286 sq.m. The rest of the existing building is to be cladded.

The additional roof area adds only a small extra rainfall flow rate of 1 l/s (for a design storm). As such it is not realistic to expect the developer to install attenuated rainwater storage system.

Overall the site is large enough to warrant a more sustainable attenuated water drainage system. The site's drainage will connect into the public (United Utilities) combined sewer. However, since only 'cosmetic' changes to the parking area and the rest of the building, it is not normal to impose a requirement to reduce current discharge rates to the public sewer, but United Utilities may have a different opinion.

For the previous application 22/00403/FUL, United Utilities responded to say that they had no comment

DRAINAGE CONDITION – NO NEED

For the reasons provided above, there is no need for a drainage condition.

Natural England

No comments at the time of writing.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised by neighbour notification letters and a site notice. Three letters of representation have been received (two from the same person) in regards to:

1. Noise and disruption in a residential area where business premises should not have permission;

2. Are there any noise issues with the newly-purposed building both inside and outside?
3. Cars parked unlawfully in residential areas are already unmanageable;
4. Loss of privacy from windows 10m from people's homes;
5. Vulnerable adults deserve to live in peace and quiet in their later lives;
6. The area is already dealing with antisocial behaviour, drugs and traffic congestion;
7. Although the current height remains almost the same, no info is given as to the replacement roof;
8. What is meant by product research?
9. Will there be regular transport vehicles delivering materials?
10. Will this new function be the only one or will there be some continuation of the current business? *Officer Note: the proposal is for the proposed use only and does not cover the existing use.*
11. The outer cladding colour is not obvious and no indication provided as to composition and flammability; *Officer Note: this element of the proposal has been removed from the scheme.*
12. What is the parking arrangement for the side of the building facing the banqueting hall? *Officer Note: the submitted Location Plan does not include the parking spaces to the front of the site facing the Banqueting Hall. The proposal provides adequate on-site parking.*
13. Where is the front door/entrance to be situated? *Officer Note: the proposed ground floor plan shows the reception is accessed from the existing entrance facing the Banqueting Hall.*
14. There are inaccuracies in the application details and description of the building; *Officer Note: this is noted however, these inaccuracies are not fundamental in the assessment of the application.*
15. The Site Plan shows a narrow green strip at the back alongside the sports terrain. What does it include? Will the 3 trees at the front of the building remain? *Officer Notes: following the submission of amended plans the green strip has been removed. The amended Block Plan shows existing landscaping to be retained.*

Amended plans letters were sent to all those originally consulted on the application, including objectors, on 20th October 2023 giving them 14 days to comment. The 14 day consultation period ended on 3rd November 2023. Two letters of representation were received which reiterated concerns listed above.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The application site is allocated within the Defined Urban Area under the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan. Policy G/D/1 is therefore relevant to any applications on the site and in the supporting text to this policy it is established that new development should be located in the urban area, so as to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside.

Policies C6 and C8 of the Rochdale Core Strategy states that the Council will support and promote the provision of better community, sport, leisure and cultural services in town centres, local centres and areas of greatest health deprivation. The previous use as a social and welfare community centre ceased a number of years ago and the building is in need of repair.

Policy E2 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will ensure a sufficient supply of suitable land, buildings and infrastructure in the right places to support the creation and retention of successful businesses and increase the number and quality of jobs to create a more prosperous lower carbon economy.

As the community use ceased a number of years ago, the change of use of the building is considered acceptable in principle and it will bring the building back into viable use subject to all other material considerations below being acceptable.

Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy P2 of the adopted Core Strategy states that the Council will protect the Borough's heritage by conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings.

Policy P3 of the adopted Core Strategy requires all new developments, regardless of location in the borough, to adhere to high standards of design. Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy states that all development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area, in addition to requiring a number of other basic planning considerations.

Paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, which is largely reflected within Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy, which requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design.

The application site occupies the site of a former church, and immediately to the south of the site, the associated Sunday School, dating from the late 19th to early 20th century remains, now Castlemere Banqueting Hall. This former Sunday School is constructed of coursed stone with a slate roof and retains original features, such as the arched windows along the front elevation. It is of some architectural and historic interest, and has been considered as a non-designated heritage asset.

Originally the proposal included cladding a large proportion of the building however, the Council's Conservation Officer was not convinced that the proposed cladding was appropriate due to the close proximity of the proposed development in relation to the non-designated heritage asset the Castlemere Banqueting Hall. Officers considered that the proposal would detract attention away from the Banqueting Hall due to its significant scale and improper materials within the surrounding area, resulting in less than substantial harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. This harm is not justified or mitigated.

Due to the above concerns the applicant amended the proposal and the cladding was removed from the scheme. Other than the repair or replacement of windows, eaves and other existing features i.e. render etc no further external alterations are proposed other than those detailed above.

As such, as there are now limited alterations to the existing elevations, the proposal is considered acceptable and would not appear as an incongruous and visually dominant addition to the street scene and would not detract from the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area including the non-designated heritage asset at the Castlemere Banqueting Hall. The proposal is therefore in accordance with adopted Rochdale Core Strategy Policies P2, P3 and DM1, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.

Residential Amenity

Core Strategy Policy DM1 requires all development proposals to demonstrate that they will not have a negative impact upon the amenity of future residents and

occupiers. Policy G9 requires that sensitive new developments such as housing are not adversely affected by existing sources of pollution, including noise, from certain types of industry. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should result in places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Noise and Disturbance

The immediate surrounding area is primarily residential, although commercial shops and restaurants, a football pitch, and a banqueting hall are also located in close proximity to the site. The area is in mixed use and as such the proposed use as a Training and Product Research & Development Facility with associated office space (Use Classes E(g)(i) & E(g)(ii)) is not considered to have a significant impact on neighbouring properties. A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application which concludes that the prevailing sound associated with the proposed use is generally lower than the background noise levels surveyed on site. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has reviewed the submitted Noise Impact Assessment and has advised there is no objection in principle however, to fully protect existing noise sensitive receptors a condition is recommended requiring the mitigation measures in the Noise Impact Assessment to be implemented which will be secured by condition.

The specific nature of the use proposed is not considered to result in significant levels of noise from the use itself or through associated vehicular movements however, Class E allows for a broad range of uses that could be implemented through permitted development rights. In order to protect neighbouring properties from other uses within the Class E range that may result in a more significant level of noise and disturbance, a condition restricting the use as proposed is considered appropriate in this instance.

Outlook/Sunlight/Privacy

Due to the nature of the proposed development, in addition to its siting away from residential properties, it is considered that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact on amenity through a loss of sunlight/daylight and overbearing appearance or loss of privacy. The building has existed for many years in its current form and this is not being altered by the scheme. Residents of neighbouring properties will see more activity at the application site however, this is not considered to impact residents in anyway. Concerns have been raised in respect of existing anti-social behaviour in the area however, there is no reason why the proposed change of use would make this situation worse. A permanent use for the site where there are regular opening hours will increase active surveillance of the site and the surrounding area and it would be expected that the business occupying the site would install its own security measures.

Officers consider that the application would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers and is therefore in accordance with the requirements of policies G9 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy.

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 115 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 proposal will provide 63 parking spaces in total (as shown on the Proposed Site Plan) and the revised Transport Statement envisages there to be typically two deliveries a week made by a large panel van or 7.5t box van which the revised Transport Statement advises will take place within the site and where adequate turning is provided to ensure that vehicles can enter and exit the site in forward gear.

Bin storage is provided to the rear of the building with access to the east onto Castlemere Street where a large refuse vehicle can access the site using the existing servicing layby off Castlemere Street.

Cycle storage is proposed in the car park and will consist of 10 Sheffield hoops.

The application has been reviewed by the Council's Highways Officer who initially raised concerns regarding the servicing arrangements as shown on the submitted site layout plan. However, a revised Transport Statement was submitted on 25th January 2024 which provided swept path analysis along with an updated Proposed Site Plan (Rev K). The Council's Highways Officer advised that their previous concerns have now been resolved and that they have no objection to the application.

As such, the application is acceptable in terms of access and highway safety and accords with the above policies subject to conditions relating to parking, bin and cycle storage.

Drainage and Flooding

Policy G8 requires that new development does not lead to any form of increased flooding or impeded natural water and flood risk management. In this regard it is important that development includes drainage that is appropriate for the site and that utilised sustainable urban drainage solutions where ever possible.

The Council's Drainage Officer has reviewed this application and noted that the additional roof area adds only a small extra rainfall flow rate of 1 l/s (for a design storm) and the site is large enough to warrant a more sustainable attenuated water drainage system. However, since only 'cosmetic' changes to the parking area and the rest of the building is proposed, it is not normal to impose a requirement to reduce current discharge rates to the public sewer and therefore no drainage conditions are required.

The proposed would therefore comply with Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy.

Trees

Policy G6 establishes that development should protect and improve green spaces and where trees are to be removed they should be replaced at a ratio of 2:1.

The proposed development does not result in the loss of any trees and a small area of landscaping is proposed to the car park area close to the bin storage. Although this is only a small area, the site is limited in the amount of available space it has for additional planting. As such, subject to a condition requiring details of the proposed landscaping, the proposal is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policy G6 of the Core Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT planning permission subject to the following 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. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans unless otherwise required by the conditions below:

Site Location Plan
Received 20th June 2023

Drawing No: 21.2592.13H – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
Drawing No: 21.2592.14E – Proposed Elevations
Drawing No: 21.2592.16E – Proposed Rear and Side Elevations
Drawing No: 21.2592.17B – Proposed Sections 3-3 & 4-4
Drawing No: 21.2592.18B – Existing And Proposed Street Scenes
Drawing No: 21.2592.19A – Proposed Works
Noise Impact Assessment by Soundscape, dated 15th September 2023,
Report – RE1 – 23- 1057
28th September 2023

Drawing No: 21.2592.2K – Proposed Site Plan
21st November 2023

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 materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development shall be as specified on the plans and/or application forms unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

4. The premises shall not be used by visitors or members of the public outside the hours of 8:00 to 18:00 on Mondays to Fridays and 09:30 to 13:30 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interest of the amenity of adjacent residential uses and to prevent nuisance arising and in compliance with Policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied until all vehicle parking space(s) have been provided in accordance with the plans hereby approved. The space(s) shall be kept available for parking at all times thereafter.

Reason: In order to ensure there is adequate provision for vehicles to be parked and adequate turning and servicing provision clear of the highway in

order to comply with Policy T2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied until 10 cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The cycle parking spaces shall thereafter be kept free of obstruction and retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for cycle parking at all times.

Reason: To encourage travel by sustainable alternatives to driving a motor car in accordance with Policy T2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Prior to first occupation of the building hereby approved, the refuse and recycling storage facility shall be implemented fully in accordance with those details shown on the approved plans and thereafter retained for use by occupiers of the dwelling/building at all times.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and to ensure that bins can be easily accessed when required in accordance with Policy T2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. Prior to first occupation/use of the building hereby approved, a scheme of soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and must include a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s) or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Core Strategy policy P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. The development hereby approved shall provide the following mitigation measures in accordance with the Noise Impact Assessment by Soundscape, dated 15th September 2023, Report – RE1 – 23- 1057, received by the Local Planning Authority on 28th September 2023:

- Replacement window and door frames fitted and sealed in accordance with specification; and
- Increased insulation to existing roof void / internal MF suspended ceiling.

Reason: In order to protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby premises from noise and disturbance in accordance with Policies G9 and DM1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

10. No works to trees or shrubs shall occur or demolition commence 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.

Reason: In order to avoid harm to habitats and species in accordance with Policy G7 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

11. Prior to first occupation of the building hereby approved details of a habitat enhancement scheme shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The scheme is to include a programme for implementation and ongoing maintenance. The habitat enhancement scheme shall thereafter be implemented and adhered to in accordance with agreed programme.

Reason: Details are required prior as insufficient information was submitted with the application and in order to avoid harm to habitats and species whilst securing biodiversity enhancement in the long term. This accords with Paragraph 180 of the NPPF and Policy G7 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

12. Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the premises shall be used for training and product research & development facility with associated office space (Use Classes E(g)(i) & E(g)(ii)) and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in the same Use Class of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: Another alternative use of the premises which may otherwise be permitted by virtue of the above Orders could be harmful to highway safety, residential amenity or the designated mixed employment zone in accordance with Policies E2, DM1 and TR2 of the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF.

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.

Informative

The applicant is advised that whilst the building to be converted has been assessed as negligible risk for bats, the applicant is reminded that under the 2019 Regulations it is an offence to disturb, harm or kill bats. If a bat is found during demolition all work should cease immediately and a suitably licensed bat worker employed to assess how best to safeguard the bat(s).