

APPLICATION NUMBER: 24/01037/FUL

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
24/01037/FUL	Nick Brookman	24 th June 2025

DETERMINATION DATE

4th July 2025 (Extension of Time)

Address: Unicorn Aerobic Fitness Centre, Cheetham Street, Middleton, M24 4DG

Proposal: Conversion of existing 2 storey commercial building to 12 residential apartments comprising of 1 and 2 bedrooms with associated works, landscaping and parking

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/A
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	Y
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	Y

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 04/07/2025

SITE

The application site relates to Unicorn House, Cheetham Street, Middleton, M24 4DG which is accessed to the south of the A576. The site is within the designated Urban Area and the Manchester Old Road Conservation Area lies immediately to the north.

The application site is rectangular in shape and approximately 0.09 hectares in size and the subject site accommodates a two-storey building which is L-shaped.

Immediately to the north of the site is the rear of properties located on Manchester Old Road; these are traditional residential properties, some of which have been subdivided. To the south of the site is a shared access road beyond which is a warehouse site which is operated by 'McBride' and is understood to involve the distribution of home cleaning products. The main vehicular access to the 'McBride' site is from Middleton Way, with the access off Cheetham Street understood to be rarely used.

The site is located close to the western boundary of the Middleton Town Centre and the surrounding area has a mixed character which reflects its location close to the Middleton Town Centre which includes residential and commercial properties.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the existing 2 storey commercial building to 12 residential apartments comprising of 1 and 2 bedrooms with associated works, landscaping and parking. The proposed development does not include any significant external or extension works to the building other than the creation of five dormer windows. Most of the external works purely comprising minor external alterations which are necessary to bring the building into its intended proposed use.

The proposed development includes the re-rendering of the building and painting of windows and doors to dark grey whilst existing brick detailing and features will be preserved. Externally the rear hardstanding and existing car parking area will be maintained and kept available for the parking of 6 vehicles.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

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

Local

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SP3/H The Strategy for Heywood
DM1 General development requirements

SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities

- C1 Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places
- C3 Delivering the right type of housing

SO3 Improving Design, image and quality of place

- P1 Improving Image
- P3 Improving design of new development
- T2 Improving Accessibility

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

- G1 Tackling and adapting to climate change
- G2 Energy and new development
- G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
- 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
- BE/17 New Development Affecting Conservation Area

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

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

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

- JP-S1 Sustainable Development
- JP-S2 Carbon and Energy
- JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment
- JP-H1 Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development
- JP-H2 Affordability of New Housing
- JP-H3 Type, Size and Design and New Housing
- JP-H4 Density of New Housing
- JP-G6 Urban Green Space
- JP-G7 Trees and Woodland
- JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- JP-P1 Sustainable Places
- JP-P2 Heritage
- JP-C1 An Integrated Network
- JP-C2 Digital Connectivity
- JP-C5 Streets for All
- JP-C6 Walking and Cycling
- JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

There is planning history on the site dating from the 1970's to 1990's but none of this is relevant to the development proposed as part of this application.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways

No objection.

Environmental Health

No objection subject to condition.

Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

No objection subject to condition.

Conservation Officer

No objection.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)

No objection subject to condition.

Urban Design

No objection subject to condition.

United Utilities

United Utilities have confirmed that they have no comments to make as this is a change of use application.

Tree Officer

No comments received.

Greater Manchester Police

No objection subject to condition.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to the occupiers of surrounding buildings on 12th December 2024. In addition, a site notice was displayed adjacent to the site on the 19th December 2024, with an advertisement published in the local press on 12th December 2024. No representations were received.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The application seeks permission for the conversion of a two storey building which is presently unoccupied and last used as a gym. The application site is located within a highly accessible and sustainable location a matter of metres from the western edge of Middletown Centre on a piece of brownfield land.

Places for Everyone establishes the need for at least 616 net additional dwellings per year in Rochdale to meet the housing needs of the borough. Policy C1 of The Core

Strategy seeks to focus housing development on previously developed sites within the urban area, setting a target of 80% of new housing on previously developed land.

Core Strategy Policy C1 sets out that, inter alia, in the south of Rochdale Borough (which includes the township of Middleton), the opportunity to provide new housing in sustainable locations will be maximised. Housing should be located within or close to key economic growth areas or town centres.

CS Policy C3 goes on to state, amongst other things, that higher density development (residential) should be focused around Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood town centres. Policy C3 recognises that higher density development should be focused in areas that can sustain higher densities, and this includes accessible sites in and around town centres, sites on or close to high frequency bus routes and sites close to railway stations or Metrolink stops.

Paragraph 124 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that *“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses”*. Paragraph 125 of the NPPF advises that *“Planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land”*. Under sub paragraph (d) of Paragraph 125 of the NPPF, *“Planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing..”*.

Further to those relevant policies as identified in the Rochdale Core Strategy, relevant policies in Places for Everyone (PfE) have been identified. PfE Policy JP-S 1 sets out that development should seek to maximise economic, social and environmental benefits. Preference should be given to previously-developed (brownfield) land. PfE Policy JP-H2 states that there should be a significant increase in the supply of new housing, including, specifically, the supply of low-cost market housing. Furthermore, as set out in PfE Policy JP-H4, new housing should be delivered at a density appropriate for the location and taking into account the site's accessibility.

It is notable that the subject building, formerly used as a gym is currently vacant and has been for a number of years. It presently therefore provides no material economic or social benefit in terms of local employment or sociable use. From a policy perspective, a gym use is not protected and the change of use or loss of this existing use is not concerning. To that end, Paragraph 128 of the NPPF sets out that *“Local Planning Authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, they should support proposals to:*

- a) Use retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework”.*

In this instance, it is considered that the proposal would lead to the provision of much needed and sought after residential accommodation in a highly sustainable location. The proposed units created would assist the Borough in meeting its housing requirements and the proposed development purely comprises the conversion of an existing building on a brownfield site, with the existing abandoned land having a negative impact on the character of the local area.

As such, the proposal is acceptable in principle and in accordance with adopted Rochdale Core Strategy Policies SP3/H, C1 and C3 Places for Everyone Policies JP-S 1, JPH 2 and JP-H 4, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.

Heritage, Design and Appearance

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that *“the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”*. Paragraph 135 goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

Additionally, paragraph 139 sets out that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

The National Design Guide (NDG) states that *“The long-standing, fundamental principles for good design are that is it: fit for purpose; durable; and brings delight”*. The NDG advises that scale, appearance materiality and detailing of buildings are key components for well-designed places. The Building for a Healthy Life guidance document states that building forms and materials should be used to reflect local character.

The above considerations are largely reflected within Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council’s adopted Core Strategy which ultimately require development proposals to demonstrate high quality design.

CS Policy P1 sets out that high quality design will be required in all new developments, requiring that under-used land and buildings are re-used and creating people-friendly and safe environments. CS Policy C3 requires new development to adhere to high standards of design, respecting context (scale, density, massing, height, layout) and contributing positively to the townscape. CS Policy DM1 states that all development proposals should be of a high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area.

The application site lies just outside the western edge of the Middleton Town Centre boundary and immediately to the south of the Manchester Old Road Conservation Area sited on a plot that is currently an unoccupied brownfield site in a deteriorated state, detracting from the character of the surrounding area. The proposed development will create active frontages along the surrounding street network, improving sense of safety for pedestrians due to natural surveillance. The proposal will appropriately increase the density of the immediate area and contribute to the diversity of uses in this area, contributing to urban resilience.

The character of the surrounding area is mixed use comprising of residential, industrial and commercial properties with buildings varying in height and architectural style/appearance. No extension is proposed to extend the existing floor area. The most significant external works comprise the creation of five dormer windows and the proposed external works are minimal and are considered to be appropriate in this urban area location given that they reflect the existing architecture of the building. The development will include the removal of the redundant metal escape staircase and the development will include the provision of an enclosed bin storage.

In terms of heritage implications, a Heritage Statement accompanies the application and the Council's Conservation Officer was consulted on this application. The Conservation Officer has no reason to disagree with the findings of the submitted Heritage Statement which concludes that the existing property is identified as being a neutral influence on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, whilst the proposed physical works to the building are limited and would have a neutral impact. The external appearance of the building is not subject to significant changes other than the introduction of new dormer windows and new window/door openings that would be acceptably designed. The applicant has confirmed that the dormers will be faced in code 4 lead which is an appropriate material.

Overall, on the basis that no harm to heritage assets has been identified it is not necessary for the application to demonstrate public benefits in support of the proposal and it is concluded that the development proposal is in accordance with PfE Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies P1, P2 and DM1; Saved UDP policies BE/17 and BE/18, and relevant provisions of the NPPF.

The appearance and condition of the existing building is significantly unattractive and presently has a negative impact on the surrounding area. Bringing the building back into use for its intended purpose will only serve to make a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the area. Accordingly, the proposed development is acceptable in terms of design and appearance and consistent with adopted Rochdale Core Strategy policies P1, C3 and DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Occupier and Neighbour Amenity

Policy DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy requires that all development proposals are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents.

Development should not affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy and development should mitigate against any impacts due to noise, dust, light and odour pollution. Policy G9 also requires that sensitive new development such as housing, are not adversely affected by existing sources of pollution such as roads and certain types of industry.

Privacy

The SPD – Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development sets out minimum space standards that should be applied to all new residential development and development which affect existing residential properties. These are:

- ☐ 21m between directly facing principal windows of habitable rooms, at an upper floor level and 10.5m between a principal window at an upper floor level a directly facing boundary of the curtilage;
- ☐ 14m between a principal window and any directly facing two storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room; and
- ☐ 10m between a principal window and any directly facing single storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room.

The SPD advises that where these separation distances cannot be achieved, proposals should be “compatible with the density and character of surrounding development”.

The proposed development comprises the introduction of five dormer windows at first floor level with two of those on the northern elevation facing north towards existing residential premises on Manchester Old Road.

Two new first floor elevation windows are also proposed on the north elevation and in relation to the two new windows, one of these will serve a bathroom (and will therefore naturally be obscured), whilst the other window will be a secondary window to a living area. The positioning of this secondary lounge space window for Apartment 7 however means that it has an outlook towards Manchester Old Road and Cheetham Street rather than directly to the rear of an existing property. In relation to the two new dormer windows, these will be obscured glazed ensuring that outlook towards existing properties on Manchester Old Road will not be possible.

All other windows on the south, east and west elevations of the building will not be associated with any impacts on loss of privacy or overlooking.

Occupier Amenity

In terms of occupier amenity, it is noted that whilst not a Core Strategy policy requirement, Policy JP-H3 of PfE sets out that all new dwellings must comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). In terms of occupier amenity, the apartments are compliant with NDSS when assessed against the submitted proposed floor plans.

The Nationally Described Space Standards state in order to provide one bed space, a single bedroom must be at least 7.5sqm in area and at least 2.15m wide. In order to provide 2 bed spaces, a double bedroom must have a floor area of at least 11.5 sqm. On review of the submitted proposed floorplans, the proposed development exceeds the minimum requirements set out within the NDSS.

It is acknowledged by Officers that the bedroom affiliated with apartment 12 would incorporate two windows comprising of an obscure glazed dormer window and a Velux roof light. The outlook for the future occupier of apartment 12 would therefore be affected but Officers consider that when assessed as a whole, apartment 12 would benefit from an acceptable overall level of outlook from the apartment as an outlook is provided elsewhere in other habitable room windows and this is considered to provide a sufficiently acceptable level of outlook for all future occupiers.

The proposed development does not provide any outdoor amenity space, however, due to the sites highly sustainable location there are opportunities to access other outdoor public amenity spaces within close proximity and further afield.

Light

Given the minimal amount of external works proposed, the level of light enjoyed by neighbouring premises would not be impacted.

Summary

The proposed development would comply with adopted CS policies DM1 and G9 and the NPPF.

Noise

Core Strategy Policy G9 sets out the Council's requirements approach to all forms of pollution including the risk of noise, as they relate to new development.

Paragraph 198 of the NPPF also states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.

The NPPG states that local planning authorities' decision taking should take account of the acoustic environment and in doing so consider: whether or not a significant adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur; whether or not an adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur; and whether or not a good standard of amenity can be achieved.

Paragraph 135 also seeks to ensure that planning decisions create places which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy seek to ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users, also requiring that development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution.

Whilst the resulting scheme by its very nature would not cause any significant impacts in terms of noise and disturbance, a Noise Impact Assessment was submitted with the application. It is also recognised that the application site is located immediately to the north of a large scale commercial building which is in full operation. Nevertheless, Environmental Health were consulted on this application and they have no objection with its findings subject to condition.

Accordingly, subject to conditions, the scheme would be considered acceptable in terms of amenity in accordance with Policy G9 and DM1 and the Council's Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD.

Trees, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

Core Strategy Policy G7 requires that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection and that opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported. It is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. Core Strategy Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

PfE Policy JP-G8 seeks to deliver a net enhancement of biodiversity resources through a collective of measures which are broadly aligned with the approach to BNG outlined within the Environment Act (2021), the NPPF and supporting guidance documents. The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are now a statutory requirement for planning applications and so the proposed development

should achieve net gains for biodiversity via species enhancement as guided by the NPPF (paragraphs 187d and 192b) to achieve measurable net gain for biodiversity.

When determining planning applications paragraph 193 of the NPPF sets out that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should also be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains.

As of 2nd April 2024, BNG of 10% for minor planning applications is mandatory for development in England under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) were consulted on this application and they have no reason to doubt the findings of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). They have requested that all proposed mitigation/safeguarding and enhancements must be followed for bats, nesting birds, badger, hedgehog and small mammals as per section 4.2 of the submitted PEA report and these measures will be secure by appropriately worded conditions.

With specific reference to bats, the GMEU have set out that the bat scoping report provided is robust and the existing building has been assessed as having moderate potential for roosting bats. As per the bat report, this triggers the requirement for a minimum of two bat emergence surveys to be undertaken between May and September inclusive with at least one survey conducted within the peak at survey season (May to August). All potential roosting features on the building will be required to be covered by a suitable experienced surveyor where possible and the use of Night Vision Aids should be implemented.

The GMEU requested that they further bat surveys must be undertaken and a report submitted to the LPA prior to determination of this application as the results of the surveys will identify if any further surveys are required and if a bat mitigation licence is required.

The surveys were submitted and the GMEU subsequently advised that they had no reason to doubt the findings of the survey results but given that foraging/commuting bats were identified nearby, a sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented to reduce disturbance to bats in the locality if external lighting is proposed. In addition to the above, the GMEU also requested that biodiversity enhancements should be secured by condition to be implemented and incorporated into the proposed development.

Trees and BNG

The NPPF recognises the important contribution of trees to the character and quality of urban environments, and their role in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Policy JP-G2 of the adopted PfE identifies trees and woodland as vital elements of the green infrastructure network and key features of urban green spaces, which Policy JP-G8 seek to protect and enhance through conserving and managing existing trees of heritage and/or aesthetic value. Policy G6 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy sets out provision for enhancing green infrastructure and requires regard to local landscape character and contribute to its conservation or enhancement. Developments should avoid the loss of existing urban greenspace or features e.g. trees unless suitable alternative provision is made, it has limited value and its development or change of use will help meet other sustainability or local regeneration objectives.

CS Policy G6 requires a replacement planting ratio of at least 2:1 and Policy G7 requires developments to protect existing biodiversity including trees and vegetation.

The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement which identifies 1 individual tree and 1 tree group are required to be removed to facilitate access around the building but these are categorised as category 'C' standard. With regards to new tree planting and soft landscaping on site, the applicant has proposed the provision of 4 new native trees alongside hedgerow planting in the car parking area to the rear of the building and this would comply with Core Strategy Policy G7.

The GMEU have confirmed that they are satisfied that the BNG assessment is appropriate, and it exceeds the mandatory 10% net gain required onsite for both habitats (+16.67%) and hedgerows (+33.89%), plus the trading rules are satisfied. A soft landscaping plan has been submitted which is consistent with the proposed BNG and this includes the planting of native species. The onsite gains are not considered to be 'significant'. The Biodiversity Gain Plan condition will apply and to discharge the condition, a Biodiversity Gain Plan, final version of the BNG metric and management plan will be required.

Accordingly, subject to condition, the scheme is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Core Strategy Policy G6 and G7, PfE Policy JP-G8 and the NPPF.

Drainage

Policy G8 requires that new development does not lead to any increased form of 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 and is itself well protected from flood risk and ensures prudent use of water resources.

Policy JP-S4 (Flood Risk and the Water Environment) of PfE expects developments to manage surface water runoff through sustainable drainage systems and development should achieve greenfield run-off rates unless it is demonstrates to be impracticable.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding.

United Utilities and the Council's Drainage Officer as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) were consulted on this application. Comments have been received from the LLFA who set out that the primary drainage strategy is acceptable in principle subject to site based testing and detailed design and the second drainage strategy is not acceptable in principle and would need to be revisited if the primary strategy is found not to be viable. Accordingly, the LLFA have recommended an appropriately worded condition.

United Utilities had no comment to make.

Therefore, subject to the suggested conditions, the proposed development would accord with adopted CS policy G8, saved UDP policy EM/7 and the NPPF.

Crime

Policy P3 of the CS requires all new developments to incorporate design measures that design out crime and ensure developments and spaces are safe to use and access. Similarly Policy DM1 requires all development proposals to minimise opportunities for crime against people or property.

The application is supported by a Crime Impact Statement (CIS) which sets out numerous points and considerations for the applicant to consider in order for the development to achieve Secured by Design accreditation.

A condition has been recommended requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with the suggestive measures to prevent crime as set out in the submitted CIS.

Subject to condition, the proposed development complies with Policy DM1 and P3 of the Core Strategy.

Highways

The application site is in a very sustainable location and is situated on a public transport route as well as being within close proximity to Middleton Town Centre. The proposal includes parking provision for 6 spaces and the Council's Highways Officer acknowledges the sustainable location of the site and has advised that this proposal will not generate any significant volume of traffic.

Cycle storage is proposed which would be covered and secured, and bin storage is also proposed.

The scheme is not considered to have an adverse impact on highway safety and would not generate a level of additional traffic which would have a detrimental impact on the safe and efficient operation of the immediate local highway network, or strategic routes. Highways Services have raised no objections. The development therefore complies with the requirements of CS Policies T1 and T2, Policy JP-C8 of PfE and the NPPF.

Conclusion

The application relates to a previously developed brownfield site.

The proposed development would provide 12 no. apartments in a highly sustainable location which is accessible via non-car travel modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport links.

As a matter of principle, a development of this type and nature is acceptable and accords with the planning framework and wider strategies for the borough.

The proposed development would support a viable redevelopment to provide much needed housing provision to Middleton and the borough as a whole. It is considered that any perceived harm arising from the loss of this vacant space in this instance is outweighed by bringing the site into a residential use including through diversification of housing choice, job creation and benefits to the local economy via increased expenditure at local businesses. There is a strong link between economic growth, regeneration, and the provision of a range of residential accommodation and it is believed that the proposed development would fulfil that objective without any material harm to the character and function of the area.

As set out in this report, the form and design of the development is considered acceptable for the site given its specific context and character. Careful consideration

has been given to the siting, scale and appearance of the development together with potential impacts through the construction phase on nearby residents and businesses to ensure it is high quality, sustainable and minimises any impacts.

With all of the above in mind, the proposed development is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that permission is **Granted** subject to the conditions below:

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 plans:

- ☐ Location Plan Drawing No 398(PL)001
- ☐ Proposed Site Plan Drawing No 398(PL)002
- ☐ Proposed Ground Floor General Arrangement Plan Drawing No 398(PI)030
- ☐ Proposed First Floor General Arrangement Plan Drawing No 398(PI)031
- ☐ Proposed Roof Plan Drawing No 398(PI)032
- ☐ Proposed Front and Side South Elevations Drawing No 398(PI)050 Rev A
- ☐ Proposed Rear and Side North Elevations Drawing No 398(PI)051 Rev A
- ☐ Proposed Cross Section Drawing No 398(PI)052
- ☐ Proposed Landscaping Plan 398(PL)003 Rev A
- ☐ Planning Statement dated 04/02/2025
- ☐ Heritage Statement dated February 2025
- ☐ Crime Impact Statement Reference 2024/0305/CIS/01 Rev A
- ☐ Sustainable Drainage Assessment Reference 83402R1 dated 23/09/2024
- ☐ Noise Impact Assessment Reference 202422051M2051C/1
- ☐ Energy Statement Reference 202422051M2051C/2
- ☐ Design and Access Statement Reference 398/DAS Rev A
- ☐ Arboricultural Impact Assessment Reference 2212_AIA.01 dated 10/02/2025
- ☐ Arboricultural Method Statement Reference 2212_AMS.01 dated 10/02/2025
- ☐ Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Reference UES04621/02 dated 26/02/2025
- ☐ Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Reference UES0462/01 V3 dated 20th May 2025
- ☐ Bat Scoping Survey Reference UES04621/03 dated 24/02/2025
- ☐ Bat Presence-Absence Survey dated 30th May 2025

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these details hereby approved unless otherwise required by the conditions below.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted

Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, details of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage schemes must include:
 - (i) A comprehensive investigation of existing drainage regimes for the paved and permeable areas of the site. This should include for full connectivity surveys and infiltration assessment using site-based data.
 - (ii) If infiltration is not found to be viable then either a surface water connection to a local watercourse or public surface water sewer which are considered to be within reasonable proximity (<100m).
 - (iii) A restricted rate of surface water discharge shall not exceed 2 l/s as stated within the Sustainable Drainage Strategy subject to detailed design.
 - (iv) Green surface-based SuDS source control and storage components should be promoted in preference to buried storage options.
 - (v) Construction details for any permeable paving including kerbing and cross-section of open graded sub-base.
 - (vi) Construction details for any surface-based SuDS components eg attenuation ponds / basins, swales, tree pits.
 - (vii) Levels of the proposed drainage systems including proposed invert, ground and finished floor levels in mAOD.
 - (viii) Detailed layouts providing conduit sizes, storage volumes, storage component footprint areas, controls, gradients and any other relevant details.
 - (ix) The background calculations of the MicroDrainage® model or any other software or calculations that have been used for the drainage design. These should include drain down times for any storage features.
 - (x) Provision of a Maintenance Document explaining how the surface water scheme will be maintained and managed after completion.

The approved scheme shall also be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement national standards. Prior to occupation/ use of the proposed development, the drainage scheme shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To promote sustainable development, secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution. To prevent an increased risk of flooding as a result of the development and to ensure satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site in accordance with Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, saved Policy EM/7 of the adopted Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: Drainage infrastructure will need to be implemented prior to commencement of above ground works and a scheme therefore needs to be agreed in advance of the same.

4. Notwithstanding any details shown on the approved plans, no above ground works (other than internal works or site clearance) shall take place until full details of the alignment, height and appearance of all boundary treatments (including but not limited to vehicular and pedestrian access gates, fences, railings and walls) to be erected to the site boundaries have been submitted

to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied before all walls and fences have been erected in accordance with the approved details. All boundary treatments shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.

Reason: In order to ensure use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the building and the surrounding area in the interests of visual amenity and heritage and to comply with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Notwithstanding any details shown on the approved plans, no above ground works (other than internal works or site clearance) shall take place until full details of the colour, form and texture of all hard landscaping (ground surfacing materials) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be undertaken strictly in accordance with the details as approved and shall be completed in all respects before the final completion of the development and thereafter retained.

Reason: In order to ensure use of appropriate materials which are sympathetic to the character of the building and the surrounding area in the interests of visual amenity and heritage and to comply with the requirements of Core Strategy Policies P1 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Prior to first occupation of any part of the development hereby approved, all proposed planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details (Proposed Landscaping Plan 398(PL)003. Any trees, plants or shrubs which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Reason: To ensure that the site is satisfactorily landscaped having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed development and in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core, Policies JP-P1 and JP-G2 of the Places for Everyone Plan and the NPPF.

7. No site clearance shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a competent Ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before clearance and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting birds interests on site.

Reason: In order to prevent any habitat disturbance to nesting birds in accordance with policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of PfE and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. No part of the development hereby approved shall be occupied until such time as a scheme of biodiversity enhancements for the site including, but not limited to, the provision of bird boxes, bird bricks, bat boxes and bat bricks are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The duly approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to first occupation of the dwellings and 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.

9. The development hereby approved shall be constructed in accordance with the recommendations set out in section 7 of the submitted and approved Noise Assessment submitted by Compliance 4 Buildings Ltd and referenced as 202422051M2051C/1 to achieve the following internal and external noise levels:

- ☐ 35 dB(A) Leq (16 hour) in the bedrooms with windows shut and other means of ventilation provided between 7 am and 11pm;
- ☐ 30dB(A) Leq 8 hour in the bedrooms with windows shut and other means of ventilation provided between 11pm and 7am;
- ☐ 35 dB(A) Leq (16 hour) in the living room/s with windows shut and other means of ventilation provided between 7 am and 11pm;
- ☐ 40dB(A) Leq (16 hour) in other habitable rooms with windows shut and other means of ventilation provided at all times.
- ☐ Noise in external amenity areas shall not exceed 55 dB(A).

Upon completion and prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted, validation testing must be carried out to ensure the required noise levels have been achieved, the details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA prior to first occupation of the apartment hereby approved.

Reason: To protect the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy G9 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

10. The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the recommendations contained within Section 3.3 and 4 of the submitted Crime Impact Statement dated 13/09/2024 and referenced 2024/0305/CIS/01 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of public safety and security in accordance with Policy JP-P5 of the Places for Everyone Plan and the NPPF.

11. The reasonable avoidance measures detailed within section 4.2.3 of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal shall be adhered to throughout the entire construction period of the development hereby approved.

Reason: For the conservation of protected species and to safeguard identified protected species which live within the site in accordance with Policy JP-G8 of the Places for Everyone Plan and the NPPF.

12. No part of the development hereby approved shall be occupied until all vehicle parking spaces have been provided and clearly marked out in accordance with the plans hereby approved. The parking spaces shall be kept available for parking at all times thereafter and shall not be used for any other purpose.

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.

13. No part of the development hereby approved shall be occupied until such time as the bike store and bin store as shown on the approved plan 398(PI)030 Ground Floor – PROPOSED General Arrangement has been installed in accordance with the approved details and made available for use. The bike and bin store shall remain available for use in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and highways safety and in accordance with Policies P3, T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- a) A Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority,
- and;
- b) The planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Rochdale Borough Council.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

For the purposes of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, a biodiversity gain plan is a plan which:

- (a) relates to development for which planning permission is granted, and;
- (b) specifies the matters referred to below:

The matters are:

- (a) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;
- (b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;
- (e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development; and
- (f) any such other matters as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.

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.

Report Author Nick Brookman