

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
22/01194/FUL	Jake Powell	25/11/2022

Address: Site of Former Venture Precision Engineering, Crawford Street, Rochdale, OL16 5RS.

Proposal: Erection of a new warehouse unit (Class B8) including levelling of yard area with retaining wall to rear and creation of two new accesses to Dodgson Street and associated works following demolition of existing unit.

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	N/A
	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
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N

RECOMMENDATION	REFUSAL
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: AT

DATE: 29.11.2022

SITE

The application relates to the industrial unit which was previously the site of the former “Venture Precision Engineering”. The site consists of a single storey red brick building, as well as two larger steel clad buildings to the rear. The site is accessed from Crawford Street and Dodgson Street.

The immediate vicinity is characterised by similar industrial type buildings and the application site is designated as a ‘Mixed Employment Zone’ in Rochdale Borough Council’s UDP Proposals Map.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for the erection of a new warehouse unit (Class B8), which the application states is to be used as an ancillary storage building to the Lancashire Farm Dairies facility along Moss Bridge Road. As its use would be ancillary, no full time employees would be based on site. Instead goods would be transported here and loaded/unloaded via vans and staff, who would be largely based elsewhere.

The proposed building would have an internal floorspace of approximately 1456sqm. The building would be formed in a 6 sided irregular polygon shape. The building would have a parapet roof style, with a maximum height of approximately 10.5 metres. Thirteen rooflights will be installed on the main body of the roof.

The proposed building would be constructed in a brick base up to approximately 2.1 metres, below cladding which would consist of a stripe style pattern starting from Dusty Grey (RAL7037), then Light Grey (RAL7035) then finally Light Blue (RAL5012). A cladding band would then separate the next cladding strips before the striping courses are inverted leading to the top of the roof. The new cladded band would be a deeper azure blue (RAL 5009).

Access to the building would be via a main entranceway to be installed on the south elevation of the structure, and a double height roller shutter on the north elevation. The building would consist of a large main storage area, as well as personnel toilets.

The application also proposes other alterations to the site including the levelling of the site with the existing kerb, the construction of a brick face retaining wall on the shared boundary with the adjoining site, as well as the installation of a 2.4 metre high paladin fence around the site.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – July 2021

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1	To deliver a more prosperous economy
E2	Increasing jobs and prosperity
E3	Focusing on economic growth corridors and areas
SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P3	Improving design of new development

SO4	Promoting a greener environment
G1	Tackling and adapting to climate change
G2	Energy and new development
G3	Renewable and low carbon energy developments
G6	Enhancing green infrastructure
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

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

EC/3 Mixed Employment Zones

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

80/D10846	Temporary Office Accommodation. Grant subject to conditions.
88/D22273	Single Storey Extension To Factory. Grant subject to conditions.
93/D29367	Single Storey Extension To Existing Workshop. Grant subject to conditions.
00/D37800	Change Of Use From Light Engineering To Storage. Grant subject to conditions.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Environmental Health Officer

Requested preliminary risk assessment is conditioned.

United Utilities

Objection. The unit proposed is located directly over a United Utilities water main.

Highways Engineer

There are a number of highway concerns regarding this application.

The application site has an existing industrial use with an established access for larger servicing vehicles, however the increase in size of the floor area from the existing building will potentially increase servicing requirements. The application includes changes to the existing access with an in/out arrangement proposed and the applicant has submitted some swept path analysis in support of this access. We have concerns that the swept path proves the site is accessible for 7.5 metre long panel van and from our analysis this is the largest vehicle that can service the

building without the need to park on the highway or undertake difficult access manoeuvres to service the building which is a concern.

As a warehouse we would expect that there would be larger vehicles either collecting or delivering goods than the 7.5 metre long panel van indicated in the application. It would be difficult to control the size of servicing vehicle via planning condition therefore it is likely that vehicles will either park on Dodgson Street to be loaded/unloaded or have to reverse into or out of the service yard onto Dodgson Street. These concerns are associated with the existing layout of Dodgson Street itself which has a sharp bend with reduced forward visibility around the site entrance. If vehicles are reversing in or out of the service yard onto Dodgson vehicles approaching will not be able to see them and vice versa this increases accident potential.

The same visibility issues would arise when vehicles are being unloaded/loaded on or near the bend in Dodgson Street.

We also have concerns about the lack of parking for the proposed development and its potential to increase on street parking and parking in the service yard which will further restrict servicing access. This Council's standards would require the provision of 14 spaces for the size and type of development and the application proposes no parking at all.

Any on street parking on Dodgson Street in the area around the proposed entrance with its poor visibility would raise road safety concerns.

We are aware that the applicant will operate the proposed warehouse as ancillary to their main trading site which is likely to reduce the issue raised above. If planning permission is granted for this site in isolation from the main business it could operate in the future with a sub-standard servicing access and lack of parking provision.

At this stage we cannot support the application until the parking and servicing issues are resolved.

Drainage and Flooding

Discharge point will be the public combined sewer in the highway, managed by United Utilities. Suggests condition for applicant to provide a drainage strategy.

Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service

Strongly recommends the inclusion of a sprinkler system.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised with neighbour notification letters. One representation was received COMMENTING on the application stating:

- ② No objections to the application, however have concerns highways and access to neighbouring properties. Suggests traffic calming measures to overcome these concerns.

The impact the proposed development may have on highway safety and congestion is a valid planning concern which will be discussed within the analysis of this recommendation.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The site lies in the defined urban area and on a wider area of land which is allocated as a mixed employment zone on the Unitary Development Plan allocations map. Saved UDP policy EC/3 and Core Strategy policy E2 is directly relevant to this allocation.

Policy EC/3 (Mixed Employment Zone) of the Rochdale UDP states that within Mixed Employment Zones development will be permitted for employment generating uses, of which includes development ancillary and complementary (both in terms of size and function) to the industrial and business nature of the employment area.

In respect of the above, the proposed use is compliant. Whilst the applicant has indicated that the proposed warehouse will be unstaffed, it should be noted that the proposed development is intended to support the growth of the existing established business, Lancashire Farm Dairies, and support the existing jobs that have been created in the main facility. Overall, the proposed development complies with policy EC/3 of the UDP and E2 of the Core Strategy.

Visual Amenity

Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general.

In addition, paragraphs 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 130 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. Finally, paragraph 134 of the NPPF states that 'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.

The application proposes one steel clad building that would be typical in design and appearance of modern day industrial units. Whilst the proposed structure would be larger than the existing buildings on site, and would be in a prominent position located on the corner of Crawford Street and Dodgson Street, it is, on balance, considered a proportionate size in a mixed use area where larger commercial buildings are located within the vicinity, as seen to the north of the site.

Furthermore, the external materials proposed would not appear out of character and overall would appear as an improvement in comparison to the existing building. Given the details, it is considered the proposed building would appear acceptable in the street scene with other similar industrial buildings in the vicinity.

Additionally, the application would retain elements of landscaping around the site, which would soften the overall visual impact of the proposed development.

Other features proposed as part of the development are also considered to be acceptable in respect of visual amenity. The layout and amount of hardstanding for access and turning is considered visually appropriate for the proposed use.

Furthermore, the proposed 2.4 metre fencing around the site is considered acceptable in principle and appearance.

In respect of the design of the building and its impact on street scene, the development is considered acceptable in the context of the site and the surrounding area. As such, the application would therefore have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding street scene and would accord with policies DM1 and P3 of the Core Strategy and policy in the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that planning decisions should always seek to secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Further to the above are the considerations of the Councils Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' which states that new developments *"should be carefully designed to protect the amenity of the occupants of adjoining properties."*

There are no properties within close proximity of the site which would be adversely affected by the proposed development as the nearest residential properties lie further to the east along Crawford Street, but they are shielded by the existing commercial units. Furthermore, it is not considered that the additional traffic movements into and around the site would be so great as to create unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance. Nevertheless, the opening hours and delivery details could be ensured via a condition in the event of an approval.

As such, the proposal would accord with the requirements of policy DM1 and G9 of the adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways

With any application for new development it is important to assess the impact on highway safety and under policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy it is established that 'In all circumstances, the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area will have priority, while providing reliable journey times for those travelling through'. Whilst Paragraph 111 of the NPPF 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 application was reviewed by the Council's Highway Engineer who raised concerns regarding the proposed development.

The most notable issue with the proposed development is that there is no certainty that the site would be occupied by Lancashire Farm Dairies presently or in the future. With this issue in mind, the proposed development would have to function as a standalone storage unit (Use Class B8).

In its current form, as noted by the Highways Engineer, the maximum sized vehicle that could access the site without infringing on highway safety and causing congestion would be a 7.5 metre long panel van. Whilst it is noted that the applicant has stated that the site will only be accessed by vans of this size, any larger vehicle than this would require to park on the highway and undertake difficult access manoeuvres to service the building, which in turn would have a detrimental impact on highway safety and congestion. This impact is compounded due to visibility issues on or near the bend in Dodgson Street.

As there is no certainty that the site will be occupied by Lancashire Farm Dairies, and that there is a possibility that other occupiers of a site in B8 use may attempt to access the proposed development using larger vehicles than a 7.5 metre long panel van, it is considered that the application proposes an unacceptable means of access to the development to facilitate the proposed Class B8 use, which would have a detrimental impact on highway safety and congestion.

Furthermore, as also noted by the Highways Engineer, the application proposes no parking on site. In line with the Council's standards, for a development of this size, a provision of 14 spaces would be required. It should be acknowledged that the parking standards require a maximum, rather than a minimum, of 1 space per 100 sq.m, as stated in Appendix 5 of the Rochdale Core Strategy. Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, as there can be no assurance that the site will only be occupied by Lancashire Farm Dairies, a development of this size and type would require some on-site parking. As no parking is proposed, the future use of the site may result in on-street parking on Dodgson Street, in the area around the proposed entrance, which would have poor visibility and would raise road safety concerns.

The proposed development would therefore lack any off-street car parking provision for employees and visitors to the site, and would have insufficient servicing arrangements to accommodate heavy goods vehicles. The development would therefore result in vehicles parking, turning and loading on the highway, including close to the bend in Dodgson Street where visibility is reduced. The proposed development would therefore have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, in conflict with policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Trees

The application identifies that four trees would be removed. 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 would result in the loss of four trees which make a positive contribution to the street scene, with no replacement tree planting proposed in mitigation. The proposed development would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area, in conflict with policy G6 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 drainage officer has been consulted and has commented that there are no viable adjacent watercourse or SW sewer and the site is highly urbanised. Therefore the only practical discharge point will be into the public combined sewer in the highway, which is managed by United Utilities. In addition, it was requested that a condition be attached to the permission in the event of an approval for the applicant to provide further details of the proposed drainage scheme via a condition.

In addition, United Utilities objected to the proposal on the grounds that the unit proposed would be located directly over a United Utilities water main which would not be permitted. In the event of an approval the necessary arrangements would need to be made to divert the water main, at the expense of the developer.

Contamination

Policy G9 requires that any risks arising from contaminated land are identified and that any appropriate actions are taken. The application has been reviewed by a Council Environmental Health Officer, who raised no objections to the proposed development on the grounds that a Phase I Report (Preliminary Risk Assessment) must be completed to assess the actual and/or potential contamination risks at the site. This information could be provided by way of a pre-commencement condition in the event of an approval.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSAL for the following reason(s):

1. The proposed development would lack any off-street car parking provision for employees and visitors to the site, and would have insufficient servicing arrangements to accommodate heavy goods vehicles. The development would therefore result in vehicles parking, turning and loading on the highway, including close to the bend in Dodgson Street where visibility is reduced. The proposed development would therefore have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, in conflict with policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed development would result in the loss of four trees which make a positive contribution to the street scene, with no replacement tree planting proposed in mitigation. The proposed development would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area, in conflict with policy G6 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Procedure Statement

The proposal would not improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area nor does it comply with the development plan and therefore does not comprise sustainable development. There were no amendments to the scheme, or conditions which could reasonably have been imposed, which could have made the development acceptable and it was therefore not possible to approve the application.

Notes for Applicant:

1. For the avoidance of doubt, this Decision Notice relates to the following drawings:-

22.2959.4A Proposed Site Plan
22.2959.5 Proposed Ground Floor Plan
22.2959.6 Proposed Elevations
22.2959.7 Proposed Section X-X
22.2959.8 Site Co-ordination Plan
Swept Path Analysis

2. The applicant's attention is drawn to the attached objection from United Utilities.

Report Author Jake Powell