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Planning Statement

Address: 35A Smithy Bridge Road, Littleborough Rochdale

PROPOSED CONVERSION OF EXISTING GARDEN OUTBUILDING TO FORM COFFEE COUNTER SALES AREA ANCILLIARY TO THE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL USE.

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the conversion of an existing garden outbuilding to form a small-scale coffee sales counter at 35A Smithy Bridge Road, Littleborough Rochdale.

The proposal seeks to provide a modest and low-impact facility serving hot drinks and refreshments to pedestrians using the adjacent public footpath and nearby train station. The development is intentionally limited in scale and operation and is designed to function as an ancillary and subordinate use to the host dwelling.

This statement demonstrates that the proposal accords with the relevant policies of the Rochdale Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises a residential property with a rear garden containing a timber outbuilding positioned along the boundary with the public footpath. This footpath provides a well-used pedestrian route connecting to Smithy Bridge train station and surrounding recreational routes.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, with the adjacent footpath generating regular pedestrian activity.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal involves the conversion of the existing timber outbuilding into a small coffee sales counter.

Works include the removal of a section of boundary fencing behind the outbuilding to allow the installation of a sliding hatch to the rear elevation to serve customers. The internal fit-out is limited to coffee preparation equipment and a small sink connected to the existing residential drainage system with no extension or increase in the existing built form proposed.

The operation will be managed solely by the occupants of the dwelling, no employment of external staff is proposed and no seating or customer facilities are proposed to be provided in any way; the operation is based on a takeaway-only basis. Opening hours are strictly limited to: 07:00 – 09:30 and 14:00 – 16:00.

4. Principle of Development

The proposal represents a small-scale, ancillary economic activity within a residential curtilage.

Policy DM1 (General Development Requirements) of the Rochdale Local Plan requires that development proposals demonstrate high standards of design, protect amenity, and do not adversely affect the surrounding area.

The proposed development complies with Policy DM1 as it retains the existing built form with minimal alteration and introduces no visual harm to the site or surrounding area. The proposal operates at a scale that does not conflict with the established residential use.

In addition, the NPPF supports sustainable economic growth, particularly small-scale local enterprises, where impacts can be appropriately managed. The proposal represents a modest and sustainable form of local economic activity.

5. Design, Scale and Character

Policy DM2 (Design Quality for New Development) requires development to respond positively to its context and maintain local character. The proposal looks to retain the existing outbuilding structure and introduce only minor alterations to the structure's appearance (a sliding hatch). The proposal site maintains the appearance of a domestic outbuilding; there are no extensions, external seating areas, or features typically associated with commercial premises. The proposal preserves the residential character of the site and surrounding area and is fully compliant with Policy DM2.

6. Residential Amenity

Policy DM1 requires that development does not result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity, including noise, disturbance, and activity levels.

The proposal has been specifically designed to minimise any potential impacts on surrounding residential properties, no seating or social space is provided reducing loitering and noise, no cooking or extraction systems are proposed, no amplified sound or plant equipment is required for day to day operations and opening hours are limited and avoid evening activity.

Customer interaction will be brief and transactional in nature, with no opportunity or incentive for prolonged stays. The absence of seating inherently discourages loitering.

Given these factors, the proposal will not result in any material harm to residential amenity and is compliant with Policy DM1.

7. Highways and Accessibility

Policy DM1 also requires that development proposals do not have an adverse impact on highway safety. The proposal is inherently pedestrian-focused due to its location adjacent to a public footpath and proximity to Smithy Bridge train station. The absence of parking provision and lack of vehicular access is actively discourages vehicular travel to the proposed coffee counter. The development does not encroach onto the public footpath, and its width and function will be fully maintained.

Operational measures (as set out in the submitted Highways Statement) will discourage unsafe parking behaviour.

The proposal is therefore compliant with Policy DM1 in highways terms.

8. Scale and Ancillary Nature

The proposal is clearly ancillary and subordinate to the main residential use.

This is demonstrated by:

- Reliance on the dwelling for services (power and drainage);
- Storage of supplies within the main house
- Operation solely by the resident family
- Absence of staff, servicing, or independent infrastructure

The use cannot function independently and remains intrinsically linked to the host dwelling. It's extremely limited scale ensures that the proposal does not represent a material intensification or commercialisation of the residential curtilage.

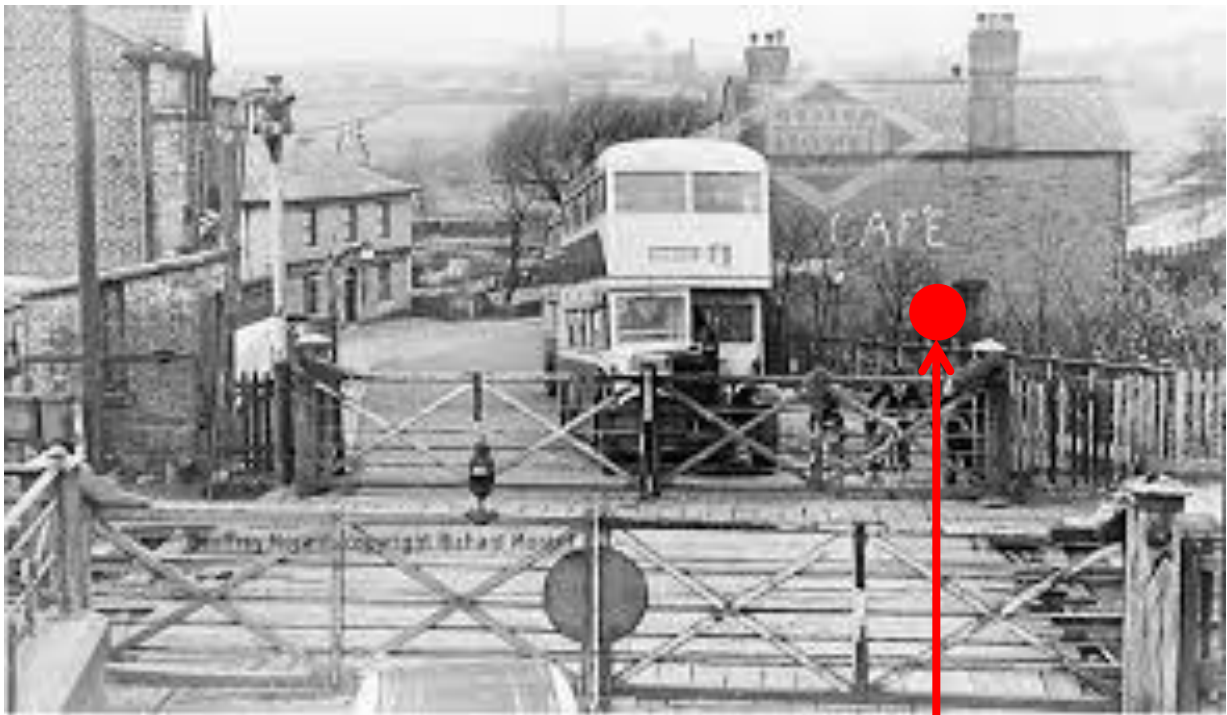
9. Sustainable Location

The proposal aligns with the sustainability objectives of the NPPF by supporting a pedestrian-based use and reducing reliance on vehicles. All activity at the proposal would serve an existing flow of foot traffic. The site's proximity to a train station makes it particularly well-suited to this type of small-scale, walk-by service.

10. Historic Context

The property is understood to have historically operated as a café serving rail passengers and walkers during the mid-20th century.

While this does not establish a lawful fallback position, it demonstrates that the site has previously supported a similar use. The current proposal represents a significantly reduced and more controlled reintroduction of that historic function.



Historic Site Image

Site Location

11. Planning Balance

The proposal delivers a modest community benefit by providing a convenient service to pedestrians and rail users, in a sustainable and accessible location.

There are no material adverse impacts in terms of:

- Residential amenity
- Highway safety
- Character of the area

The development is compliant with Policies DM1 and DM2 of the Rochdale Local Plan and aligns with the overarching principles of the NPPF.

12. Conclusion

The proposed development represents a highly modest, low-impact, and well-controlled use of an existing outbuilding within a residential curtilage.

The proposal is ancillary in nature, limited in scale and hours, designed to avoid noise, disturbance, and traffic impacts and is considered fully compatible with the surrounding residential context.

The absence of seating, parking, and staff ensures that the proposal functions solely as a small-scale convenience for passers-by rather than a destination use.

The proposal complies with the development plan and should be supported and approved.