

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0023
Location: Capitol Car Wash, Whitworth Road, Rochdale, OL12 6ER
Proposal: Retrospective planning application for a car wash canopy with proposed replacement external cladding.
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application relates to a carwash site on Whitworth Road on the outskirts of Rochdale town centre. The site comprises a large metal canopy structure, a metal storage container and a tarmacked forecourt. Whitworth Road is a key transport route linking the town centre to the northern suburbs and includes residential, commercial and retail units.

The site faces northeast towards Whitworth Road, with the canopy separated from the pavement by the forecourt. It borders a Tesco carpark to the south-east, and to the south, west and northwest, the site is bound by an area of cleared grassland accessed via Bentley Street to the south. The cleared grassland is the subject of application 24/00993/FUL for the erection of two apartment blocks.

PROPOSAL

Retrospective permission is sought for the erection of a large metal canopy structure accommodating a car wash and associated equipment. The structure is open to the front and the roof slopes downwards to the rear. It comprises grey corrugated metal sheets fixed to a metal frame.

At the front the canopy measures 4.3m (height) X 27m (width) and at the rear it measures 3.7m (height) X 23m (width), with a total depth of 11m.

The application is similar to a previously refused application (ref: 25/00520/FUL) with the substantive difference being the indication that the canopy and roof will be clad using the following materials:

Roof: Kingspan KS1000RW roof panels. Colour: Gooswing Grey

Walls: Kingspan K-Roc AWP wall panels. Colour: Merlin Grey

As such, the following assessment will focus on whether the use of the aforementioned cladding would suitably mitigate the harm identified under the previous application.

RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

25/00520/FUL - New enlarged canopy to existing commercial car wash-retrospective. **Refused** (September 2025) for the following reason:

By virtue of its siting, scale and materiality the canopy represents an imposing and incongruous feature, harmful to the character and appearance of Bentley Street. Its dilapidated and utilitarian appearance fails to assimilate with its surroundings and is detrimental to visual amenity of the area. The development therefore fails to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and Policy P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone (PfE) 2024:

JP-P1 Sustainable development

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

T2 Improving accessibility

DM1 General development requirements

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: 20.04.2026

Press Notice: N/A

ASSESSMENT

Design & Amenity:

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 135 goes on to state that planning decisions should ensure that new developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, materiality, layout, and landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment. Paragraph 139 reads that development that is not well designed should be refused.

Furthermore, PfE policy JP-P1 requires all new development to respect and acknowledge the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, scale and materials used. CS policies P3 and DM1 require 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.

The previous application was refused on the grounds of the impact of the canopy on the character and appearance of its surroundings. The officer's report stated that: 'the appearance of the canopy is considered to be unduly harmful to the character and appearance of Bentley Street due to its siting, scale and materiality.'

In an attempt to overcome the previous reason for refusal, the applicant has amended the plans to show that the proposed canopy will be clad using Kingspan KS1000RW roof panels in colour 'Gooswing Grey' and Kingspan K-Roc AWP wall panels in colour 'Merlin Grey'. These materials were selected after concerns were raised by the Case Officer regarding the initially proposed cladding panels.

While the use of cladding would not alter the scale of the canopy, it is considered that the materials proposed would lessen the visual prominence of the canopy and enable it to assimilate more comfortably in views from Bentley Street, noting that the land immediately to the south of the application site has more than a theoretical chance of becoming a residential development.

The cladding would be two tones of grey, and the walls would have a less textured appearance than the roof. This would enable the canopy to blend in with the sky more effectively and would appear much less jarring than the appearance of the current structure.

Overall, it is considered that the use of the proposed cladding would sufficiently alleviate the concerns of the Authority, and the use of this cladding can be secured via condition.

In light of the above assessment, it is considered that the proposed materiality would overcome the previous reason for refusal, resulting in an acceptable standard of design that would integrate successfully with its surroundings. The amended canopy would therefore comply with the requirements of PfE policy JP-P1, CS policies DM1, P2 and P3, and the NPPF.

Highways:

CS Policy DM1 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.

The Council's Highways Officer was consulted on the previous application and raised no objection to the canopy, stating that it has no detrimental impact on highways safety. The development is therefore acceptable in accordance with the NPPF, and CS policies DM1 and T2.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to the following conditions -

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

N/A

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. No significant problems have arisen during the consideration of this application, and the application has been determined in a timely manner, in accordance with the policies with the Development Plan.

Human Rights and Public Sector Equality Duty

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report. In particular, Article 6 (1), of the European Convention on Human Rights in relation civil rights and a fair hearing; Article 8 of the ECHR in relation to the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 Protocol 1 of the ECHR in relation to the protection of property have all been taken into account.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Local Planning Authority under a legal duty to have due regard to the

advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application. In particular due regard has been afforded to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers are satisfied that the application material and Officers' assessment has taken into account these issues.

The application has been considered in accordance with the Rochdale Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy – Embracing All Voices (2024-2026), which seeks to promote a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion that benefit the community as a whole.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (2)

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

- Site Location Plan. Dwg no. 02
- Current Elevations. Dwg no. 03. Rev A
- Original Site Plan. Dwg no. 04
- Original Elevations. Dwg no. 05
- Proposed Elevations. Dwg no. 05. Rev C
- Existing Site Plan. Dwg no. 06
- Proposed Site Plan. Dwg no. 07

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, the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 2 Within six months of the date of this permission, the existing cladding shall be removed from the walls and roof of the structure hereby approved and replaced with the following materials:

- Roof: Kingspan KS1000RW roof panels. Colour: Gooswing Grey.
- Walls: Kingspan K-Roc AWP wall panels. Colour: Merlin Grey.

Reason: Reason. In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure the timely removal of the unauthorised cladding, in accordance with policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay.