

HORIZON CARE & EDUCATION

LAND ADJ. TO GREAT HOWARTH SCHOOL, GREAT HOWARTH, ROCHDALE PROPOSED TEMPORARY CAR PARKING

Introduction & Background

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Alder King Planning Consultants on behalf of Horizon Care & Education in connection with an application seeking planning permission for the temporary change of use of land adjacent to Great Howarth School for school parking and associated works. Planning permission is being sought to use the land for school related parking for up to five years.

Horizon Care & Education has entered into an agreement with the Council relating to its proposed use of the application site. The Council owns the land in question, and it has confirmed that it forms part of a wider area that has been earmarked for future redevelopment.

Pending redevelopment proposals coming forward, and to address current parking issues and traffic along Great Howarth affecting residents and the school, the Council (as landowner) has given the applicant its consent to use the application site for school-related car parking for a period of up to five years. However, such use can be terminated by the Council at any time during this period.

Site Description

The application site is Council-owned land immediately to the north of Great Howarth School. It is laid out as hardstanding and has been used as a ball court (see image below - courtesy of Google).



The site is bounded to the north, east and west by open space. Great Howarth School is immediately to the south. The nearest residential property is located about 30m away to the south east

There is a pedestrian access to the site off the road that separates the site from the school.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, so at low risk of flooding, and is not subject to any landscape or heritage designations.

Application Proposal

As noted above, planning permission is being sought for the temporary change of use of the application site to parking for Great Howarth School and associated works. Planning permission is being sought to use the land for school related parking for up to five years.

School-related car parking would only occur during the hours of 07:00-19:00 Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

The associated works comprise a widening of the existing pedestrian access to facilitate vehicular access and the installation of a security gate.

Relevant Planning History

The application site itself is not subject to any relevant planning history.

The adjacent school site was the subject of a Lawful Development Certificate (Ref: 24/00825/CPL) issued in October 2024 confirming that the proposed erection of two new single storey detached school buildings and associated 2m high new fencing did not require planning permission.

These works formed part of the applicant's proposals to bring the previously vacant school site back into use, which it now is.

Relevant Planning Policy

The relevant planning policies here are set out within the Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy (October 2016), the Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan (June 2006), and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Relevant policies include:

- C7 – Delivering Education Facilities
- T1 – Delivering Sustainable Transport
- G/D/1 – Defined Urban Area
- G/CF/1 – Community Facilities & Public Services
- G/3 – Protection of Existing Recreational Open Space

The NPPF states at paragraph 48 that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible.

Paragraph 100 states that local planning authorities should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through decisions on applications.

Paragraph 116 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, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

Planning Assessment

This section of the statement provides an assessment of the key planning considerations relating to the principle of the proposed use, residential amenity, and transport and movement.

Principle of Use

As has already been noted, the applicant has entered into an agreement with the Council relating to its proposed use of the application site. The Council owns the land in question, and it has confirmed that it forms part of a wider area that has been earmarked for future redevelopment.

Pending redevelopment proposals coming forward, and to address current parking issues and traffic along Great Howarth affecting residents and the school, the Council (as landowner) has given the applicant its consent to use the application site for school-related car parking for a period of up to five years. However, such use can be terminated by the Council at any time during this period.

The site is located within the defined urban area, where new development is acceptable in principle, and would be subject to little change, with just a widening of the existing pedestrian access proposed and a new security gate.

Furthermore, both local planning policies and NPPF provisions give support to proposals that assist in improving schools and facilitate meeting their operational requirements. Set against this, it is acknowledged that Policy G/3 of the UDP seeks to protect existing recreation spaces from unsuitable development.

Policy G/3 does allow development on, or of, public and private recreation spaces where certain exceptions apply. Exceptions include certain proposals which would not result in a deficiency in recreational open space in relation to present or future needs and/or deliver wider community benefits.

None of the stated exceptions apply directly here. However, the proposed use will only be for a temporary period and would not preclude the ball court use being reinstated in the future, should the Council deem it appropriate to. Furthermore, the Council has confirmed that the site is likely to be subject to wider redevelopment proposals in due course, and the temporary loss is unlikely to result in any material deficiency in recreational open space provision.

The proposed car parking will address a current parking shortfall which is having some adverse impact upon the local community. Therefore, community benefits will arise from the proposal.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Policy G/3, it is contended that the proposed use is acceptable when the planning balance is applied to all relevant local and national policy provisions and both the temporary nature of the use and the community benefits that will arise are factored in.

Residential Amenity

The site is not bounded by residential properties, and most houses are located to the south with the school located between them and the application site. However, there are a small number of houses located to the south east on Regal Fold.

The use of the land for limited school-related parking is unlikely to give rise to any adverse impacts through increased noise and disturbance. The vehicles that will park at the site are already coming to the school, so there will be no increased traffic movements. Furthermore, school parking will only take place during the day on Monday to Friday. No night time or weekend school parking will take place.

In addition, the provision of this car parking is likely to have some beneficial impact through reducing the need for drivers to travel on surrounding residential streets to locate a parking space.

Overall, the proposed works will not give rise to any adverse impacts on the amenities of local residents.

Transport & Movement

As noted above, the use of the land for limited school-related parking is unlikely to give rise to any increased traffic movements. The vehicles that will park at the site are already coming to the school. Furthermore, school parking will only take place during the day on Monday to Friday.

The vehicular access will be sufficiently wide to accommodate passing vehicles and adequate visibility exists at the exit for prevailing local traffic conditions. Vehicles will be able to enter and exit the site in a forward gear.

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, following mitigation, would be severe. This would clearly not be the case here given the nature of the proposals.

Summary & Conclusion

This Planning Statement has been prepared in connection with an application seeking planning permission for the temporary change of use of land adjacent to Great Howarth School for school parking.

Planning permission is being sought to use the land for school related parking for up to five years. Associated works comprise a widening of the existing pedestrian access to facilitate vehicular access and the installation of a security gate.

The applicant has entered into an agreement with the Council, as landowner, relating to its proposed use of the application site. Pending redevelopment proposals coming forward, and to assist in addressing current parking issues affecting the school and local residents, the Council has given the applicant its consent to use the application site for school-related car parking for a period of up to five years. However, such use can be terminated by the Council at any time during this period.

When assessed against relevant planning policy provisions in both the development plan and NPPF, it is contended that the application proposal is acceptable for the following reasons:

- The site is located within the defined urban area.
- Great weight is required to be given to proposals to improve schools.
- Notwithstanding the provisions of Policy G/3, the proposed use is acceptable when the planning balance is applied and the temporary nature of the use and the community benefits arising are factored in.
- The proposal will not give rise to any adverse impacts on the amenities of site neighbours.
- The proposal will not give rise to any adverse highway safety impacts.

In light of the above, we trust that planning permission will be granted for this temporary use which has the support of the Council as landowner.