

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO	CASE OFFICER	DATE
25/01118/FUL	Nick Brookman	12 th June 2026

DETERMINATION DATE (EXTENSION OF TIME)
17th June 2026

Address: Church Inn, Castle Hill Road, Heywood, Rochdale, BL9 6UH

Proposal: Change of use from Public House and Restaurant to Offices with associated demolition and extension works, alterations to roof height, parking provision, storage and staff garden area.

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?	Y

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	APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RG

DATE: 17 June 2026

SITE

The application site is a formerly occupied Public House known as the Church Inn which occupies a prominent roadside location on Castle Hill Road. The site is located in the settlement of Birtle close to the administrative boundary of Bury.

The application site is identified as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA) and it is located within the Green Belt. The surrounding land is predominantly characterised by open farmland and agricultural fields. Nevertheless, land to the north is occupied by the Grade II Listed Church of St Johns the Baptist. Land to the north east is known as the former Castle Hill Quarry which has been closed for many years. Land to west and south remains open agricultural land whilst Castle Hill Road is located to the west which serves the nearest neighbouring residential properties, of which there are 5.

The Church Inn is a two storey building constructed of coursed stone (painted white) which benefits from several extensions. The Church Inn benefits from a large and very generously sized plot providing ample parking provision and amenity space to the east of the site.

The topography of the application site varies from the entrance into the site where the access road sweeps downwards into the site when the site then somewhat levels out across the parking space and built up area.

The land is bound by a mixture of dry stone walling and timber post and rail fencing.

The application site is bounded by a network of public footpaths to the north.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the change of use from a Public House and Restaurant to Offices with associated demolition and extension works, alterations to roof height, parking provision, storage and staff garden area.

The application has been subject to amendments since the original submission date and the changes involved the following:

- Remove Large Detached Storage Unit.
- Remove Detached amenity Building.
- Remove provision of HGV, plant and large vehicle use and storage.
- Remove hardstanding providing access to detached storage building.
- Increase parking / reinstate parking previously identified for HGV, Plant and large vehicles.
- Amend the proposed gates to 5 bar timber or similar.
- Amend Fencing to post and rail / wire at acceptable height.
- Remove timber cladding to single storey facade upgrade, provide additional detailing for cladding.
- Provide additional detailing for stonework relating to raising the height of roof.
- Provide additional info identifying increase in height.
- Retain existing garage building, provide slight extension and reface in stone, this will be a storage building for garden and surrounding land maintenance, lawnmower etc. Remove all white paint from existing / original building.

Whilst the primary development is the proposed change of use, the following external changes are also proposed:

- Existing single storey side extension to be removed.
- First floor flat roof projection to be removed.
- Existing detached garage removed.
- Roof height to be increased at first floor level.
- New detached garage provided.
- New single storey extension added.
- New post and rail fencing.
- New timber access gates.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

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

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE).

The following policies are relevant:

Sustainable and Resilient Places

JP-S1 Sustainable Development
JP-S2 Carbon and Energy
JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment
JP-S6 Resource Efficiency

Greener Places

JP-G1 Landscape Character
JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
JP-G9 The Green Belt

Places for People

JP-P1 Sustainable Places
JP-P2 Heritage

Connected Places

JP-C1 An Integrated Network
JP-C2 Digital Connectivity
JP-C6 Walking and Cycling
JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1 Delivering a more prosperous economy

E1 Establishing thriving town, district and local centres
E2 Increasing jobs and prosperity
E5 Encouraging the visitor economy
E6 Supporting and diversifying the rural economy

SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities

C8 Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities

SO3 Improving Design, image and quality of place

- P1 Improving image
- P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

- 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
- DM1 General Development Requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/2 – Green Belt

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

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

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

PREAPP/00113/24 - Change of use from public house and restaurant to office including alterations to existing building and plant storage area

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The proposed development has been subject to amendments and the consultee responses referred to below are based on those amendments.

Highways and Engineering

No objection.

Environmental Health

No comments received.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

No objection subject to condition.

United Utilities

No comments to make.

Urban Design

No objection subject to condition.

Conservation Officer

No objection subject to condition.

Land Contamination

No objection.

Public Right of Way Officer

No comments received.

Bury Council

No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the application has been advertised by neighbour notification letters (issued on 15th December 2025) and site notices were posted adjacent to the application site on 15th December 2025.

Over 450 comments were received based on the original application prior to the current amendments being made. Those comments raised concerns on the following matters:

- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- The scale and industrial nature of the use is entirely out of keeping with the rural setting and the historic character of the former pub site.
- Increased HGV movements pose a serious safety risk to bridle path users, particularly horses, which can be startled by noise, fumes, and sudden vehicle movements.
- The enjoyment, safety, and accessibility of these rights of way will be severely compromised.
- The proposal conflicts with planning policies requiring the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and recreational routes.
- The site is also adjacent to a church which hosts a range of community activities as well as services and the use of HGV's will represent a significant risk to churchgoers and activities.
- The site of the former pub has long served as a local landmark and community focal point.
- Replacing a historic and socially valuable site with an industrial vehicle storage yard represents a significant loss of local heritage and community identity.
- The proposed use offers no public benefit to compensate for this loss.
- Heavy vehicle storage and movements will generate unacceptable levels of noise, diesel fumes, vibration, and light pollution.
- Early morning and late-night vehicle activity is likely, causing disturbance to nearby residents and wildlife.
- Risks of fuel spills, surface water contamination, and soil degradation are inherent in HGV storage operations.
- Local rural roads are not designed to accommodate frequent HGV movements.
- Increased heavy traffic will create hazards for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, and other road users.
- The development risks congestion, road damage, and reduced safety at junctions and narrow lanes.
- The proposal serves a private commercial interest and offers no meaningful benefit to the local community.

- Any claimed economic benefit is outweighed by the substantial environmental, safety, and amenity harms.

Since amended plans have been submitted and following a re-consultation period with neighbours, no new comments have been received.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

Change of Use

First and foremost, 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 (c) 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, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused, 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”*.

Policy C8 of the Council’s Core Strategy (CS) places an importance on improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities. This policy mentions that these facilities are vital to local communities and provide the services needed for a good quality of life, for example, helping to promote community cohesion.

The proposed development will principally result in the change of use from a community use to a non-community use. The Localism Act 2011 empowers community groups to effectively manage local assets with one of its key features providing the ‘Community Right to Bid’ meaning that such community groups can nominate buildings or land as ‘Assets of Community Value (ACVs)’. The emphasis on this right is designed to help preserve important community facilities and ensure that local groups have the opportunity to purchase these assets if they ever became available on the property market.

The LPA can therefore, via the Localism Act 2011, give some weight to this matter in consideration of an application if a premises is listed as an ACV. However, in this instance, the Church Inn is not listed as an ACV.

For context, historically the property traded as a Public House and Restaurant until the impact of Covid-19 when the business ceased operation in December 2021. The premises have remained vacant since and the building was placed on the market in May 2023 until it was more recently purchased and subject to this planning application. The applicants have submitted that the absence of any such ACV nomination demonstrates that the property is not considered a valued or essential community facility in this location and it has instead become an increasingly redundant building in functional terms as well as becoming visually detrimental in this Green Belt and countryside location.

There is no doubt that in recent history the Church Inn will have been a well-used Public House given it’s countryside location adjacent to a wider network of Public Rights of Way along with the benefit of having a large car parking area to serve wider patrons therefore attracting a mixture of locals, walkers and hiker, as well as customers from the

wider area who would travel by car. However, as above, Covid 19 hit and the business ceased operation in December 2021. In the assessment of this application, the community value of the application site is a material consideration in the determination of this application and the Local Planning Authority has a duty to consider the social well-being of its communities when carrying out its statutory processes. Despite the active marketing of the Public House, the property has been vacant for over 4 years without any viable interest or offers being received and this ultimately demonstrates the lack of community interest in this use in this location as well as the insinuation that regrettably, the use of the application as a Public House and hospitality venue is no longer economically viable.

In addition, given the NDHA status of the application site, in accordance with paragraph 210 of the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities must take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Taking this into account, it is acknowledged that the proposed development would bring a NDHA back into use which is considered to be economically beneficial when weighed against the current circumstances. However, as discussed above, from a community perspective, the loss of a Public House could be considered harmful given it would result in the permanent loss of a community asset that has stood for generations.

Nevertheless, when considered against paragraph 210 of the NPPF, the proposed development would sustain the significance of the NDHA, it would bring a brownfield site back into use and regenerate the application site creating a new sustainable development that would not in the opinion of Planning Officers result in any detriment to the social well-being of the nearby Birtle community.

Economically, CS Policy E1 states that the Council will focus retail, leisure, cultural, office, residential and other development to promote the viability and vitality of all the borough's town centres to maintain them as thriving and sustainable centres. CS Policy E2 corresponds with CS Policy E1 in that the Council will direct office development to town centres in accordance with CS Policy E1.

The applicants BDB, are located approximately 2 miles from the application site by Heap Bridge and this application would allow their sustainable growth and expansion into a larger premises without a significant relocation distance.

NPPF Paragraph 88 sets out that planning decisions should enable:

- a) The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings;
- d) The retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Taking the above into account, it is recognised that the proposed change of use would ultimately secure the long term future and re-use of a vacant premises on an existing brownfield site and the development would sustain the desirability of maintaining the economic viability of the application site whilst allowing an existing local business to sustainably grow and expand in turn contributing to the local economy.

Green Belt

The entire application site is located within the Green Belt as allocated by the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024). PfE Policy JP-G9 which has superseded Core Strategy Policy (G4) sets out that *'the beneficial use of the Green Belt will be enhanced where this can be achieved without harm to its openness, permanence or ability to serve its five purposes. In particular, the enhancement of its green infrastructure functions will be encouraged, such as improved public access and habitat restoration, helping to deliver environmental and social benefits for our residents and providing the high-quality green spaces that will support economic growth'*.

The National Planning Policy Framework, states that *'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence'*.

Paragraph 153 requires that *'When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations'*.

The application relates to the change of use of the existing Public House along with other additions and alterations comprising demolition of existing extensions, addition of new extensions, raising the roof, boundary treatments and a new single storey detached garage to be positioned on the footprint of the existing garage.

Paragraph 154 states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it meets one of the listed exceptions.

Paragraph 155 of the NPPF also confirms that *'The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:*

- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;*
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;*
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and*
- d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157'*

It is noted however that paragraph 156 of the NPPF refers to major development and this is not relevant to this application.

In this instance the applicant and their agent are proposing that the development subject to this application is not inappropriate development and it would benefit from Paragraph 154 (c) of the NPPF in that the proposed development would not be inappropriate development because the proposed extensions and alterations do not

result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of original building. The agent has therefore not put forward any very special circumstances as they do not consider the proposal is inappropriate development and the Local Planning Authority concur with this view.

It is also important to note that the proposed replacement garage would benefit from Paragraph 154 (d) of the NPPF in that the replacement of the existing garage would be in the same use (storage) and not be materially larger than the one it is replacing.

Accordingly, the development is not considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and an assessment against Paragraph 155 of the NPPF is not relevant to this application.

Heritage and Design

The application site is non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) and it lies adjacent to the Grade II Listed Church of St John the Baptist.

Paragraphs 207 and 208 of the NPPF require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting; and that the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance; local planning authorities should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 209 of the NPPF states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Paragraph 210 sets out three considerations which local planning authorities should consider when determining applications:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 212 notes that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 213 follows that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

PfE Policy JP-J2 (Heritage) sets out that particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm. These include historic town centres, places of worship, historic transport routes including the canal network, industrial buildings and structures including textile mills, farmsteads and other sites, buildings, and areas of identified archaeological, architectural, artistic and/or historic value.

Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy. Development proposals which will help safeguard the significance of and secure a sustainable future for Greater Manchester's heritage at risk will be supported in principle, provided they are not contrary to national policy or other policies in the development plan. Proposals should be informed, as necessary, by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate heritage assessment(s) in the development plan evidence base and/or any updated heritage assessment submitted as part of the planning application process.

Amongst other criteria, Policy P2 of the Core Strategy sets out that the Council will protect the boroughs heritage by conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings.

A Heritage Assessment was submitted to accompany this application, and this concludes that the proposed development would preserve both the significance and the setting of the Grade II Listed Church owing to the physical separation, established boundary treatments and hardstanding that physically dissects the two sites.

The Council's Conservation Officer was consulted on this application and on the basis of the revised application and proposed development, have raised no objection subject to conditions.

Heritage and Design Assessment

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.

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 NPPF is clear 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. However, paragraph 139 does also make clear that significant weight should be given to:

- a. development which reflects 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; and/or
- b. outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

The Council's Urban Design team were consulted on this application and they have recognised that the scheme has fundamentally improved through the omission of the plant storage building and amenity block and other through the provision of other design refinements.

Roof Works

The justification behind the proposed alterations and extensions to the existing building stem from a Civil Engineering Report which has identified that the existing roof is in a poor and deteriorated condition with widespread structural and material defects. The ridge and purlins are visibly deflected; rafters are undersized and affected by historic fungal decay; and there is extensive evidence of water ingress, failed leadwork, and open joints within the external slate covering. The appraisal notes that much of the existing structure comprises a combination of aged softwood replacements and ad-hoc bolted timbers, providing no consistent structural continuity. Wall plates are weakened by long-term damp penetration, and several roof trusses have fractured tie members and failing joints, leaving the load path uncertain. These defects have led to uneven settlement of the ridge line and localised cracking in the masonry gable ends. HME concludes that the existing roof has reached the end of its serviceable life and cannot be made compliant through repair alone. The structure lacks sufficient bearing capacity to meet current loading and snow-load standards and poses potential safety risks if retained. In particular, the report highlights the danger of ongoing progressive movement in the trusses and the likelihood of further deflection under new imposed loads associated with reroofing works.

Internally and beyond these structural defects, the current first floor internal headroom is very limited in places falling below 1.5m. This inevitably restricts the usability of the first floor and prevents compliances with current Building Regulations relating to fire escape routes, fire separation and safe circulation.

The introduction of a new insulated roof build-up inevitably increases the structural depth — incorporating rafters, insulation, ventilation cavity and plaster finish — which would further reduce the already constrained ceiling height if the ridge were not raised. To retain the existing height would therefore result in a first floor that is neither compliant nor practical for occupation. The proposed modest increase of approximately 900 mm at the ridge and proportionate eaves lift is essential to offset the new roof depth and restore acceptable headroom of around 2.4 m, thereby allowing safe, efficient and accessible workspace. The height adjustment also enables the new structure to be designed as a complete, integrated roof truss system, allowing improved structural stability, lateral restraint to the walls, and simplified fire-compartmentation at

ceiling level. The opportunity to renew the roof structure provides a permanent and safe solution that cannot be achieved through partial or patch repair.

The Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed that whilst the raising of the roof would result in some harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, the harm has been clearly justified and the reuse of existing materials and re-building of the existing chimneys would help to mitigate this harm. The revised plans have confirmed that the chimneys will be rebuilt and that existing slates will be reused. A methodology for the chimney works and samples of materials will be conditioned, as well as soffit, eaves, verge and ridge details.

Garage

The proposed garage has now been reduced in size and it will now replace an existing garage on the exact same footprint in a like for like replacement in terms of floorspace.

The existing garage is constructed of pebble dash render with what appears to be timber soffits and a sheet profiled roof. The existing garage is an unattractive structure adjacent to the existing Inn and the proposed amended garage would introduce a new stone external skin.

The proposed design changes to the existing detached garage are welcomed and would be a betterment on the existing garages appearance.

Materials will be subject to condition.

Proposed Extension

The proposed zinc clad extension has been subject to design refinement since original conception and now comprises a much simpler materials palette and modern addition which significantly strengthens it's proposal.

In such a sensitive setting, the success of a more contemporary or innovative approach is heavily dependent on the quality of detailing and the robustness of the design specification. Further refinement has been undertaken to the fenestration which is now well aligned and the proposed extension would provide a very contemporary addition to the existing building. This new arrangement has created a more consistent alignment with the proposed modern façade.

The proposed extension as a whole is a modest addition to the host building which would not overly dominate nor be considered a disproportionate addition to it. On the basis of what is proposed there is a marginal increase of 3% in respect of the overall volume of the built development as a result of the proposed development.

Given the sensitive nature of the site, conditions will be imposed to secure the use of appropriate materials.

Proposed Boundary Treatments and Landscaping

The site will be access via a new 5 bar timber gate that would be supported by stone pier supports and would attach to dry stone walling that would be extended along the existing access and egress point.

The rest of the site will be bounded by a 1.2m high post and rail timber fence.

These boundary treatments are acceptable and would ensure the development is in keeping with its rural surrounds.

No new soft landscaping is proposed but this is irrelevant given the proposed development would not result in the loss of any existing biodiversity.

Summary

The development is appropriate in terms of its scale and massing, with appropriate external materials to be subject to condition and detailing which would ensure the development would assimilate well with the existing character of the area. Therefore, the proposal is acceptable in terms of design and appearance and consistent with adopted Rochdale Core Strategy policies P1, P2, P3 and DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework

Highways and Public Rights of Way

Owing to the benefit of the amended proposals, the development is now 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.

Public Right of Way and Bridleway HeyBp46 lies immediately to the north of the application site and the proposed entrance point (which utilises the existing access) lies immediately off the Public Right of Way. The Councils Public Rights of Way Officer was consulted on the amended proposals but their comments remain outstanding. Nevertheless, given the nature of the proposed development, it is not considered that the use of the application site as an office would generate a level of new vehicular traffic that would go above and beyond the lawful use of the existing site as a Public House.

Highways Services at Rochdale Borough Council and Planning Officers at Bury Council have raised no objections and the proposed development is acceptable with regard to CS Policies T1 and T2, Policy JP-C8 of PfE and the NPPF.

Noise and Neighbouring Amenity

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 180 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. Additionally, Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy requires that proposals should not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy.

Environmental Health were consulted on this application but their comments remain outstanding on the revised proposals. Nevertheless, in the absence of those comments, the proposed development as a Class E Office Use would not in itself be considered to be a noise generating use that would go above and beyond the noise levels that would be expected by the current lawful use of the premises as a Public House.

The proposed development is not introducing a use to the area that would generate a level of noise that would be considered to be measurably worse than the lawful use of the site as a Public House. The proposed use would naturally require operational use during more social hours than the unsociable hours that are typically associated with a Public House. Nevertheless, subject to a condition restricting operational hours and deliveries, it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with the amenity requirements of CS policies DM1 and G9 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 demonstrated 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 were consulted on this application but they confirmed they had no comments to make. Nevertheless, the proposed development essentially comprises the re-development of the existing site which already benefits from its own drainage provisions of which this development would connect to.

Overall, the development therefore would not increase or re-direct surface water elsewhere and Officers consider that the proposed development would accord with Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S4 of PfE and the NPPF.

Ecology

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. CS 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 demonstrable 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 gain.

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. In this instance however, it is acknowledged that this site does not impact any biodiversity and the site to be developed has a completely sealed surface and therefore has a biodiversity value of **zero**.

Accordingly, it is not considered that the statutory requirement to provide 10% BNG is applicable here.

Nevertheless, in accordance with the aforementioned policies, the provision of biodiversity enhancements will be subject to condition and these enhancements could include integration of bat or bird boxes, hibernacula, and hedgehog houses, as per the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). The PEA also found the site to have potential for nesting birds, reptiles, common amphibians, badgers, and hedgehogs. No further surveys were recommended, however precautionary working methods for each species were. The GMEU have no reason to disagree with this assessment and recommended that the proposed Precautionary Working Methods contained within the submitted PEA are adhered to throughout the course of the development and secured via condition.

The submitted PEA found the main building on site to have high bat roosting potential and as such three further surveys were recommended. These surveys were undertaken in June, July and August 2025 and found two common pipistrelle day roosts. In commenting on the application, the GMEU confirmed that they had no reason to doubt the findings of the surveys, and should the proposed mitigation be implemented, they have no reason to doubt that the conservation status of this bat species in the locality can be maintained. They have therefore confirmed they have no objection subject to condition.

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.

Energy and Sustainability

Core Strategy Policy G1 sets out measures to address climate change and emissions, whilst Policy G2 requires that new development adhere to the energy hierarchy.

Policy JP-S1 of PfE requires development to aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts, utilise sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives.

Places for Everyone Policy JP-S2 sets out expectations for developments to minimise carbon emissions, following the energy hierarchy, and incorporating renewable energy and EV charging. JP-S2 has replaced existing policies within the Rochdale Core Strategy which related to these considerations.

Greater Manchester's vision is to be at the forefront of action on climate change and to make its fair contributions to international commitments by becoming a carbon neutral city region by 2038. To meet this target, PfE endorses the following commitments:

- Be carbon neutral by 2038
- Hold cumulative carbon dioxide emissions to without the carbon budget
- Initiate a programme of mitigation to reduce emissions including by:
 - Significantly upscaling solar photovoltaic energy;
 - Reducing heat demand in homes;
 - Moving away from carbon intensive gas as the primary source of heat;
 - Reducing heating and cooling demand for public and commercial buildings;
 - Increasing biofuel use;
 - Enable sustainable choices for travel and decarbonise transport;
 - Significantly upscaling building retrofit; and
 - Increase the delivery of nature-based solutions and biodiversity net gain.

The application is not accompanied by an Energy and Sustainability Statement and for that reason, in line with current policy objectives and in the interest of encouraging a transition to a low carbon emission and energy network in accordance with CS Policies G1 and G2 and PfE Policy JP-S2, a condition is imposed to this permission requiring the submission of a renewable scheme (including but not limited to) the provision of solar photo-voltaic panels and / or air source heat pumps including details of their siting and appearance.

Accordingly, subject to condition, the proposal would be satisfactory in terms of the objectives of PfE policy JP-S2 and CS Policies G1 and G2.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions:

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
- Proposed Site Plan Drawing No 24.3412.SC5.6B
- Proposed Floor Plans Drawing No 24.3412.SC5.1A
- Proposed Front and Rear Elevations Drawing No 24.3412.SC5.4B
- Proposed Side Elevations Drawing No 24.3412.SC5.5B

- Proposed Sections Drawing No 24.3412.SC5.3
- Existing and Proposed Garage Details Drawing No 24.3412.SC5.2A
- Planning and Design and Access Statement Referenced 24.3412 dated March 2026
- Heritage Assessment dated October 2025
- Additional Heritage Information Reference 24.3412 dated May 2026
- Boscastle Diamond Brace Planed Gate – Product Specification
- Post and Rail Fencing Specification
- Specification for the Removal of Paint, Cleaning, Repointing and Repair of Historic Stonework
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment dated 2nd April 2025
- Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys dated 2nd September 2024
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment WC-395.1a
- BNG Exemption Statement WC-395.2 Revision A
- Structural Appraisal dated 3rd April 2025 01 Second Revision
- External Wall Recladding Specification - Zinc Standing Seam System

The development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings and documents hereby approved unless otherwise required by condition 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, Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use classes) Order 1987, (as amended), and the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended) or any equivalent Order following the revocation and re-enactment thereof, the development hereby approved shall only be used for the purposes described within Use Class E(g)(i) and for no other purpose including other uses within Use Class E.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety and in accordance with Policies G9, P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy.

4. Notwithstanding any description of materials in the application, no above ground construction works shall take place until samples and full specifications of materials to be used externally on the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt this includes all works to the existing building (soffits, eaves, roof verges and ridge details) and the proposed garage (facing stone, eaves and roof materials). Such details shall include the type, colour and texture of the materials and the development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of this Non-Designated Heritage Asset and ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Notwithstanding any description of materials in the application, no above ground construction works shall take place until samples and full specifications of the

proposed zinc cladding to be used externally on the development hereby approved have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt a built sample shall also be provided on site demonstrating seam orientation and finish. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of this Non-Designated Heritage Asset and ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. No above ground works shall take place until full product specifications for all windows, roof lights, external doors and detailed designs of the window and door reveals, at a scale of not less than 1:20, to be used on the development hereby approved, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, all roof light windows should be conservation style and all windows and doors shall be installed in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Notwithstanding any details included within the application, no development shall take place on the existing roof until such time as a full works methodology for the proposed roof works and chimney repairs has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, existing roof slate and stone shall be reused wherever possible. If required, samples of any new stone or slate to be used on the development hereby approved, must be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to their installation.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of this Non-Designated Heritage Asset and ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. Notwithstanding any details included within the application or the Specification for the Removal of Paint, Cleaning, Repointing and Repair of Historic Stonework, no development shall take place until such time as a full works methodology for the cleaning of all existing stonework has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, the full works methodology shall also include a proposed trial area to be first agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

The approved methodology shall then take place on the agreed trial area and no further existing stonework outside of this trial area shall be cleaned without the approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The full works shall then be carried out in complete accordance with the duly approved details.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of this Non-Designated Heritage Asset and ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, full details and specifications of a renewable energy or energy saving scheme (consisting of but not limited to) solar photo-voltaic panels including large scale drawings at a scale of not less than 1:50 and / or air source heat pumps including details of their siting and appearance, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of achieving the objectives of PfE Policy JP-S2 and CS Policies G1 and G2 and in the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-S2 and JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, a scheme of biodiversity enhancements for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The duly approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to first use of the building 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.

11. No development shall take place until the Local Planning Authority has been provided with:

a) a license issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55, of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorising the specified activity/development go ahead: or

b) a statement in writing from the relevant licensing body or LPA to the effect that it does not consider that the specified development will require a license

Reason: In order to minimise potential risk to protected species and in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: The demolition of the building is likely to cause harm common pipistrelle bats as identified in the Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys, Arbtech Consulting Ltd 2025. These bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and protective measures must therefore be agreed in advance.

12. No works or development shall take place until all Precautionary Working Methods set out within the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment dated 2nd April 2025 have been implemented and carried out in full.

Reason: In order to minimise potential risk to protected species and in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

13. The development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until all proposed boundary treatments have been installed and completed in full in accordance with Drawing No 24.3412.SC5.6B. For the avoidance of doubt, this relates to the Boscastle Diamond Brace Access gate, the extended dry stone wall and the proposed post and rail timber fencing.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. No external lighting shall be installed on the building hereby approved or across the site unless and until a detailed scheme for the same has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any such scheme shall be duly implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of this Non-Designated Heritage Asset and ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and in the interests of ensuring the conservation of protected species in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

15. The development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until such time as details for the design of refuse/recycling bin store has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The duly approved scheme shall be installed in complete accordance and made available for use prior to the approved development first being brought into use. The approved refuse and recycling scheme shall be retained as constructed for its intended use thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. 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.

17. The development hereby approved shall not be operated outside the hours of 07:00am and 20:00pm Monday – Sunday.

Reason: To protect the amenity of nearby occupants and in accordance with Policies G9 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

18. The proposed garage hereby permitted shall only be used for storage purposes incidental to the primary use of the land which is Use Class E(g)(i). The garage shall not be used for any other purpose.

Reason: In order to safeguard the residential amenity and character of the area.

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 not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

De minimis exemption.

Procedure Statement

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.