

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0122
Location: HEYWOOD DISCOUNT WALLPAPERS, 1 ADELAIDE STREET, HEYWOOD, OL10 4HD
Proposal: Change of use from Decorating Store to Car Sales and Class 4 MOT Testing Station - part retrospective
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Nick Brookman

SITE

The application site lies within the Defined Urban Area and it relates to an existing car sales showroom known as the Castlefield Car Centre located on Adelaide Street, Heywood.

The current use occupies the building formerly used by O'Neill's Decorating Centre.

The application site is surrounded by other commercial and industrial premises but there are residential terraced dwellings immediately to the east of the application site.

The site itself is characterised by a car sales forecourt to the front and south of the application site whilst the main showroom building and associated office space occupy the buildings in the centre and to the east of the site. The north and rear of the application site is made up of hardstanding and provides a service entrance to allow vehicles to enter the servicing area to the rear via a back entrance off Townrow Street.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and the Heywood Critical Drainage Area and the site is not, nor is it adjacent to, any listed building or designated heritage asset.

PROPOSAL

The application is part retrospective and seeks planning permission for the change of use of the land from its former use as a decorating store to a car sales and car servicing and MOT testing station

No external changes are proposed as part of the proposed application and the entire development retains the existing footprint and fenestration and window / door openings.

The only external change that has taken place since the change of use occurred relates to the installation of new advertisements for the existing use of the premises and an informative is included in response to this.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

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

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

JP-P1	Sustainable Places
JP-J1	Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth
JP-C8	Transport Requirements of New Development
JP-S1	Sustainable Development

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SD1	Delivering sustainable development
DM1	General development requirements
SO1	To deliver a more prosperous economy
E2	Increasing jobs and prosperity
SO3	Improving design, image and quality of place
P3	Improving design of new development
SO4	Promoting a green environment
G9	Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability
SO5	Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport
T2	Improving accessibility

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1	Defined Urban Area
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RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

None

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

No comments received.

Environmental Health (Noise)

No comments received.

Highways

No objection but have requested financial contribution of £4,000 towards a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification letters issued to neighbouring properties and premises and by way of a site notice posted outside the application site on the 11th August 2026.

One objection was received which raised the following concerns:

Since the change of use occurred there has been issues with on street parking and street cleansing due to vehicles parking on Townrow Street, Aspinall Street and York Street.

The proposal sets out that there will be on-site customer parking and staff parking Yet since 2019 since they occupied the site they have continually parked vehicle on public road and close to junctions which cause obstruction and safety concerns for pedestrians and road users.

The vehicles they park on public highway are often not taxed. I have over the past number of years reported numerous vehicles for being left on public highway, practically abandoned and not taxed.

The parking of vehicles also causes issues with street cleansing and repair maintenance, who are unable to road sweep; carry out weed spraying or surfacing repairs. The area has become a dumping ground.

I feel that the parking activities raise safety concerns and have a visual impact on the area due to the obstructive congested parking restricting street cleansing and highway maintenance giving a broken window affect leading to the area being a dumping ground.

ANALYSIS

Principle

The application site is located within the Defined Urban Area as designated under the Proposals Map of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). New development, wherever possible and appropriate, should be concentrated within the urban area in order to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside.

National Planning Policy E2 sets out that to support business growth, substantial weight should be given to the economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt.

National Planning Policy L2 also confirms that substantial weight should be given to a scheme where the benefits of a development proposal would achieve one or more of the listed objectives. In this instance part b is relevant:

b. Making better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings (such as: by bringing back into residential use empty homes and other suitable buildings; converting space above shops; redeveloping underutilised retail and business sites; and building on or above service yards, lock-ups, car parks and other transport infrastructure which are no longer required).

Policy E2 of the adopted Core Strategy also ensures that there will be a sufficient supply of suitable land, buildings and infrastructure to support the creation and retention of successful businesses.

In this instance, the application relates to the regularisation of the existing use of the premises which has redeveloped an underutilised former retail and business on a brownfield site in a sustainable location. The development is a viable re-use of the premises and the application site is located within an existing predominantly industrial/commercial area where there is a mixture of larger and smaller industrial units in close proximity.

Given the surrounding land uses, it is considered that subject to a satisfactory assessment against all material planning considerations, the principle of development for the proposed use is acceptable and in accordance with the requirements of National Planning Policies E2 and L2, Policy E2 of the Core Strategy and PfE.

Design

Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy 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 proposal does not incorporate any increase in built development and the floor area remains the same. The only external or design considerations relate exterior painting of the existing building the installation of new advertising to serve the current business occupying the premises fronting Adelaide Street. On consideration of the overall design and appearance of the unit, it is considered that it is in keeping with the prevailing character of the wide commercial area.

Therefore, the existing use of the application site complies with CS policies DM1 and P3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Neighbour Amenity

National Planning Policy P3 sets out that development proposals should be appropriate for their location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, whether these effects are on or off-site; and whether this is as a result of the development itself or the product of preexisting conditions in its vicinity.

In assessing the potential effects of pollution, consideration should be given to the potential sensitivity of the site, and its intended occupiers and users, as well as that of the environment and population in the surrounding area (including where certain groups could be particularly vulnerable to its effects, such as children and older people).

Paragraph 2b also confirms that development proposals should not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site. Adverse impacts of this nature should be avoided where possible, or else mitigated to an acceptable degree. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to reduce pollution affecting the wider area.

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.

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.

In this instance, the application site is located within an existing well established employment / commercial area but it is recognised that there are residential properties within close proximity of the site which could be adversely affected by the proposed development.

However, it is not considered that the proposed development would introduce any additional traffic movements into and around the site that would be so great as to create unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance beyond those associated with the former use of the site or in comparison to neighbouring land uses. Taking this into account, Volksmaster Ltd is located immediately opposite the application site and this is a well established MOT Service and vehicle repair unit which currently operates from 08:30am to 17:30pm Monday to Friday with no operational hours on Saturday or Sunday.

The Engineers Arms Public House lies immediately to the east of the application site which is operational every day of the week into unsociable hours and Esso Petrol Station immediately opposite the site is also open until 12am along with Tesco Express associated with it on the same forecourt.

Nevertheless, given the neighbouring residential dwellings located on Aspinall Street and Adelaide Street and their proximity to the application site, it is considered necessary to restrict the hours of operation of the application site to protect the amenity of these residential dwellings during hours where background noise would typically be expected to be kept to a minimum.

Accordingly, whilst the proposed development is not introducing an unfamiliar use in this mixed use environment, for the above reasons it is considered that subject to condition, the existing use of the application site would be in accordance with the amenity requirements of CS Policies DM1 and G9 and the NPPF.

Highways

Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to improve accessibility by locating development where good access to public transport is available or can be provided and in all circumstances, prioritises the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area. Policy DM1 also 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.

Paragraph 4 of National Planning Policy TR6 states that development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement. This applies both during the construction phase and following completion.

As part of the application process the Council's Highways Department have been consulted and they have set out that the proposal makes use of the existing access point which is adequate for a development of this size and nature. Ample dedicated parking has been provided on site for this proposal but the danger of a proposal of this usage is that the car park also becomes the shop window for the store and customer parking can become occupied by stock.

Highways have suggested that to control this parking to ensure it does not interfere with the operation of surrounding businesses through the introduction of a Traffic Regulation order to control where parking takes place. As such Highways have requested a financial contribution of £4000 for the introduction of waiting restrictions at this location to assist the safe and expeditious movement of vehicles along highways in the immediate vicinity.

Highways have also recognised that there are no changes to the existing highways network as a result of the proposed development and they have no road safety concerns resulting from the application site providing that overspill parking is controlled.

In assessing the above comments provided by Highways and objection received by a member of the public raising parking and highway concerns, Planning Officers consider that the proposed visitor and staff parking to the rear can suitably be controlled by condition to ensure that a minimum amount of spaces are cleared marked, delineated and kept freely available for staff and visitor parking.

In addition, Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address potential unacceptable impacts through a planning condition in accordance with National Planning Policy DM6. Overall, the development can be made acceptable through the use of planning condition and the request for a financial contribution in this instance is not considered to be proportionate.

Accordingly, subject to condition the use of the application site is considered to accord with Core Strategy Policy T2 and the NPPF in respect of highways, parking and access.

Flood Risk

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 but it is sited within the Heywood Critical Drainage Area. However, the proposed development would not increase or re-direct surface water elsewhere and it is assumed that foul water connections would remain as existing.

The application is accompanied by a Drainage Report which sets out that the scheme will be designed to restrict the rate of surface water discharge from the site to a maximum of 70% of the existing pre- development flow rate to the same outfall.

The drainage scheme will be designed to attenuate flows, including climate change allowance, with flow rate and storage areas to be agreed.

It shall be demonstrated that discharge from the site shall not cause an increase in flood risk elsewhere.

The scheme shall include a detailed maintenance and management regime for the storage facility including flow rate. The approved maintenance and management scheme shall be implemented throughout the lifetime of the development.

Officers therefore consider that the use of the application site would accord with Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S4 of PfE and the NPPF.

Ecology

Policy G7 of the Core Strategy requires developments to protect existing biodiversity including trees and vegetation. The NPPF also requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment and policy JP-G8 of PfE requires that through local planning a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought.

Biodiversity net gain became mandatory on minor sites on the 2nd April 2024 and it would therefore be applicable to this application. Legislation sets out that all sites should provide 10% net gain unless the proposal falls into a prescribed exception, which includes de-minimis development, i.e. development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square meters (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat, or 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerow).

In this instance the application site is a completely sealed surface and the LPA are satisfied that the development is exempt from BNG requirements and the impact would be de-minimis. Additionally, due to the existing nature of the development subject to the application it is considered that there are no additional ecological impacts from the development and the proposal complies with the requirements of policy G7 of the Core Strategy, PfE and the NPPF.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is acceptable in principle and officers consider that there are no technical barriers to the proposed use, subject to suitable conditions where necessary to mitigate potential impacts of the development.

Recommendation

That Planning permission is granted subject to the below conditions.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (4)

- 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 and documents:
 - Site Location Plan
 - Pre Existing Elevations Drawing No 08 Rev A
 - Pre Existing Floor Plans Drawing No 01 Rev B
 - Existing Elevations Drawing No 07 Rev A
 - Existing Floor Plans Drawing No 10 Rev A
 - Proposed Elevations Drawing No 06 Rev A
 - Proposed Floor Plans and Section Drawing No 03 Rev B
 - Design and Access Statement Dated April 2026

· Drainage Statement Dated May 2026

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings hereby approved unless otherwise required by further conditions 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 The car parking spaces as identified on Drawing No 03 Rev B for use by staff and customers shall be kept available for staff and customer parking at all times thereafter and those spaces shall not be used for any other purpose.

Reason: In order to ensure there is adequate provision for staff and customer 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.

- 4 The application site and development shall only be open and operate between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Saturday and not at all on Sundays or bank holidays.

Reason: In the interest of amenity in accordance with Policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 6 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.

Informatives (1)

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 5 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 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.

7 The applicant is reminded that a separate application may be required for the approval of the existing advertisements under the Advertisement Regulations (2007).