

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

62 Yorkshire Street

Rochdale

OL16 1JP

Proposal

Change of Use of First and Second Floors to 3 No. Offices and Alterations to Shopfront to Create Access.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted by 'Planning Management Ltd' on behalf of the applicant who owns the property at 62 Yorkshire Street in Rochdale Town Centre. The building is three stories high with a large outrigger to the rear. Currently the building is occupied at ground floor by a mobile phone shop. The upper floors of the building have historically been used as storage and a small ancillary office. The delivery of the scheme would make a positive change to the area providing much needed office space for businesses in the town centre.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement, and accompanying Heritage Statement, site plans, floor plans, and elevation plans submitted as part of this proposal make reference to the land use, constraints, policy, guidance and possible issues. The Statement addresses these matters categorically.
- 1.3 Further to the above, the NPPF states that Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.
- 1.4 The applicant would like to work with the Council in order to secure approval for the proposed use.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

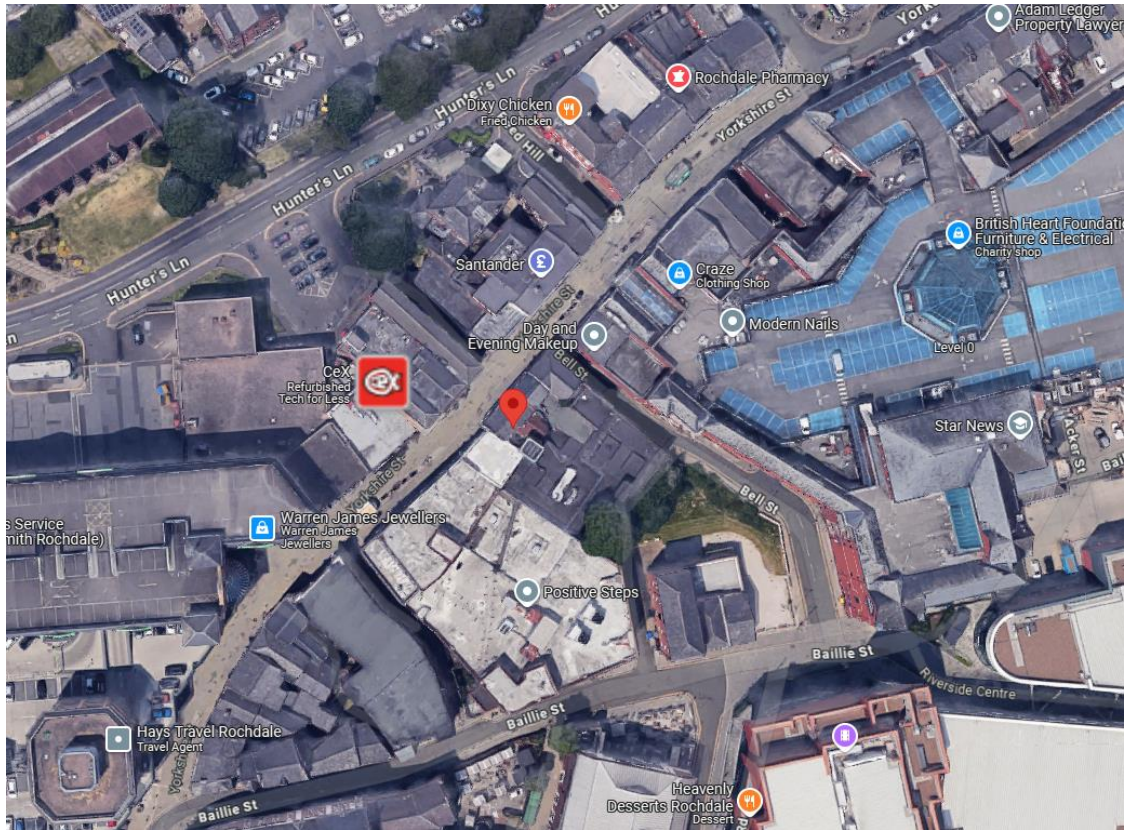
- 2.1 The application relates to a three storey terraced building located on Yorkshire Street within Rochdale Town Centre. The ground floor section of the building is currently used as a Mobile Phone Shop. The shop has modern aluminium shopfront coloured black with fascia sign above. The upper two floors consist of one large central window each with peddledash finish to the walls.
- 2.2 The site lies in a prominent location within the Town Centre Conservation Area, Primary Shopping Area, and along a pedestrianised route. The adjoining buildings are occupied by retail at ground floor with offices and residential accommodation above, the properties vary in style and character with a mixture of modern and historic features.
- 2.3 The site is located in close proximity to the new transport bus interchange, Town Centre Metrolink Stop. The site is considered to be in a sustainable location being well served by public transport and well related to an adequate range of existing services and facilities within a short walking distance. The red edge location plan shows the building has some external curtilage to the rear.
- 2.4 Servicing is mainly provided from the front.



Above: Image shows the front elevation of the proposed building.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The applicant is applying for full planning permission to change the use of the first and second floors of the building from ancillary office/storage use to 3 separate offices, this includes a large office on the first floor, and two smaller offices on the second floor. The first floor would provide a communal toilet.
- 3.2 The proposed offices would be accessed from the front of the building. In order to provide separate access for the office units the shopfront would be altered by reducing the size of the shop window and providing a separate door leading to the first floor level. No other changes in terms of materials and colour of the frames would change.
- 3.3 To the rear the existing Fire escape door would be replaced with a new fire door adjacent to provide sufficient escape.
- 3.4 The Town Centre in particular, represents an appropriate location for such initiatives, offering the prospect of increased diversity, security and a general revitalisation. The Town Centre has the potential to provide office/business opportunities which cannot easily be found elsewhere in the town, or indeed in the surrounding region. Such opportunities are likely to be particularly suitable for new startups or businesses looking for a more central location.
- 3.5 The conversion of the upper floor of the building would help rejuvenate this property in the Town Centre Conservation Area.



Above: Aerial Image shows the location of the property in the Town Centre on Yorkshire Street.

4.0. INVOLVEMENT

4.1 It was not considered necessary in this instance for a formal pre-application advice to be sought from the Councils planning officers regarding the office use. It is considered the scheme put forward is an acceptable proposal that would provide quality office space in the town centre area further increasing growth in Rochdale.

4.2 Paragraph 40 of the NPPF states;

“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”.

4.3 This Statement has been submitted as part of this planning proposal to provide a reasoned justification of the proposal using local and national planning policy and guidance.

4.4 The issues of Highways safety, amenity of the surrounding area, design, heritage and the principle of the development are taken into consideration in the assessment below.

5.0 HISTORY

5.1 A history check has been undertaken which has revealed the below planning history for the site, the relevant planning history includes;

01/A5118	Consent to display an advertisement	62, Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL16 1JP	Internally Illuminated Fascia Sign And Projecting Box Sign.	Decision Made	Approve	13/8/2001
02/A5162	Consent to display an advertisement	62, Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, Lancashire	Internally Illuminated Fascia And Projecting Box Sign	Decision Made	Approve	09/5/2002
06/A5561	Consent to display an advertisement	62, Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 1JP	Internally Illuminated Fascia Sign (Retrospective)	Decision Made	Approve with Conditions	16/1/2007
13/00882/FUL	Full planning permission	62 Yorkshire Street Rochdale OL16 1JP	Change of use from Retail (use class A1) to Restaurant and Hot Food Takeaway - (use class A3-A5)	Decision Made	Approve with Conditions	15/10/2013
24/01234/FUL	Full planning permission	62 Yorkshire Street Rochdale OL16 1JP	Change of use of 1st and 2nd floors from office/storage area to one apartment (C3) including formation of an additional door openings on front and rear elevations	Decision Made	Withdrawn	17/6/2025
81/D13026		62 Yorkshire Street Rochdale	New Shop Front	Decision Made	Refuse	27/1/1982
81/D13162		62 Yorkshire Street Rochdale	Enclosed Staircase To Rear Of Shop Premises	Decision Made	Approve with Conditions	03/12/1981
85/A3295	Consent to display an advertisement	62 Yorkshire Street Rochdale	Internally Illuminated Fascia Box Sign And Projecting Sign	Decision Made	Approve	06/3/1985

6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 Rochdale's Core Strategy was adopted in July 2016 and is the key Development Plan Document. It replaces significant elements of the existing Unitary Development Plan as the document that sets out the long-term strategic policies for Rochdale's future development and will form the framework that planning applications will be assessed against.
- 6.3 The Core Strategy seeks to deliver sustainable development and growth in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It aims to increase investment in the borough and to make it a more prosperous place by 2028. The Core Strategy will have a major role in guiding the regeneration of the borough, building on the investment that has already taken place in some areas and identifying where to focus on next.
- 6.4 It looks to build on the borough's assets, heritage and identity and on its connections and relationships with neighbouring towns. In particular, the borough needs.
- 6.5 The following Local Plan policies have relevance to the proposal:

DM1	GENERAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS
P3	IMPROVING DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT
E1	ESTABLISHING THRIVING TOWN, DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES
E2	INCREASING JOBS AND PROSPERITY
G9	REDUCING THE IMPACT OF POLLUTION
T2	IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

Saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies:

G/D/1	DEFINED URBAN AREA
G/S/1	TOWN CENTRES

NPPF (2024)

- 6.6 The NPPF clearly states ‘that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’ (paragraph 7). Paragraph 10 confirms that ‘in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development’.
- 6.7 Paragraph 11 states that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. It goes on to say that ‘for decision-taking this means:
- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
 - d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 6.8 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF, advises that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 6.9 Paragraph 116 of 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 would be severe.
- 6.10 The general perspective of the NPPF is that planning should proactively drive growth and support sustainable economic development. It also states that planning should make

effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed and sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth.

6.11 In terms of retail uses the NPPF states at Paragraph 128;

“Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

6.12 The government published its NPPG on 6 March 2014. This is intended to complement the NPPF and to provide a single resource for planning guidance, whilst rationalising and streamlining the material. Almost all previous planning Circulars and advice notes have been cancelled. Specific reference will be made to the NPPG or other national advice in the Analysis section of the report, where appropriate.

7.0 ASSESSMENT

Principle

- 7.1 The offices proposed would be located within Rochdale Town Centre. Policy E1 of the Councils Core Strategy is therefore relevant and which states ‘We will focus retail leisure, cultural, office, residential and other development to promote the viability and vitality of the boroughs town centres.
- 7.2 The application site is located in the Defined Urban Area as allocated under the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan. As such policy G/D/1 is relevant to any applications on the site and this establishes that development should be located in the urban area so as to support urban regeneration and protect the countryside.
- 7.3 Policy E2 of the Core Strategy establishes to;
- ‘ensure a sufficient supply of suitable land, buildings and infrastructure in the right places to support the creation and retention of successful businesses and increase the number and quality of jobs to create a more prosperous lower carbon economy.
- 7.4 The site is sustainably located within the town centre along Yorkshire Street and provides easy access to local facilities, shops, food outlets and public transport connections. It is not considered that the proposal would compromise the ability to achieve the Local Plan’s strategic objective of sustainable development as set out in Policy. Neither are there any direct conflicts with the development strategy for the Town as set out in Policy resultant from the proposal by virtue of its location within the defined development boundary and Town centre.
- 7.5 The proposed change of use of the upper floors of the building would reuse a part of the property which is empty and disused, and the site would contribute effectively to this prominent location. The site is in need of further investment to bring the whole building back to a suitable functional use and where it would play a positive role and impact on the surrounding area.

- 7.6 The site is well located in a mixed-use urban area so as to support urban regeneration and protect the countryside. The proposal would provide good quality office provision which is much needed in this inner urban area in this town centre. It would enhance the character of the area by bringing an existing portion of the site back into use, it would consider the needs of local businesses, protect the surrounding built environment and provide the future occupiers with services close to the town centre within walking distance and reducing the need to travel.
- 7.7 The effect on amenity by reason of noise or other nuisance would be minor given its location amongst other noise generating uses and the general make up and character of the area which in themselves produce a level of noise.
- 7.8 The internal design provided given the town centre location is considered to show that there would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupants or adjacent land users, including by reason of overlooking or for the conditions for future users and occupiers of the development.
- 7.9 It is also considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the safe and efficient operation of the existing transport and road infrastructure. Highway's safety is further discussed in the relevant section below.
- 7.10 For the reasons set out above, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable subject to consideration against the following (main) matters including the impact on visual amenity (design and appearance); highway safety and parking; the impact on neighbouring amenity; and the living conditions of the future occupiers. Other matters include refuse and recycling arrangements.
- 7.11 In light of the above it is considered that the principle of providing offices at first and second floors with retail retained at ground floor is acceptable.

Amenity

- 7.12 Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy sets out a number of basic planning considerations that apply to all development. Further to this, paragraph 17 of the NPPF, containing the ‘core planning principles’, advises that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 7.13 Policy G9 of the Core Strategy sets out that the Council will seek to reduce all forms of pollution by requiring that development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution.
- 7.14 The NPPF (paragraph 125) states that ‘Decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)’.
- 7.15 It has already been established above that the principle of providing office space at the site is considered acceptable. The area is established as mixed use, and the proposal would therefore be in keeping with existing land uses around the area. It is however important to ensure that the proposal would not impact unduly on matters such as noise and other pollution effects upon existing surrounding properties.
- 7.16 In relation to noise, it should be acknowledged that there would be some noise from neighbouring commercial land uses as well as noise from Yorkshire Street, although pedestrianised. However, given its location amongst existing noise generating uses, the noise from neighbouring uses is not considered to have a significant impact on the amenity of future occupiers, or from external noises which is expected in this area. The proposal is for offices, and therefore occupants would not be staying overnight or sleeping at the premises.

- 7.17 In respect of other matters, it is important that the development provides adequate space about buildings, it is considered that although only a 9-metre distance would be provided from the front elevation to the building's opposite, this is a town centre location where Design Guide separation distances cannot be achieved. It is considered in this instance that this distance is acceptable when taking the location and regeneration impacts into consideration. The window to the rear at second floor would provide a sufficient distance and outlook over the roofs of neighbouring properties. Similar relationships exist on neighbouring properties.
- 7.18 Therefore, with regard to the occupancy standards of future occupiers of the property, it is noted that each office within the building would be provided with natural light and ventilation, with an outlook to the street to the front, and rear of the property. The windows would all provide an outlook and ventilation which would be sufficient.
- 7.19 In light of the above, it is considered that the development would provide adequate space about buildings, so as to protect neighbouring occupiers from any excessive levels of overshadowing and/or loss of privacy. The application is therefore acceptable in this respect and would meet with the expectations of Policies along with the relevant requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Parking and Accessibility in the Town Centre

- 7.20 Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy relates to accessibility and Policy DM1 requires all development to provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking and manoeuvring arrangements provided.
- 7.21 As part of the strategy to reduce reliance on the private car, the Town Council is keen to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. Walking, particularly over shorter distances, is an important mode of transportation for journeys such as visiting shops and going to school. It is beneficial to personal health and is environmentally friendly. There is a need to ensure that routes for pedestrians are pleasant and direct as well as

safe. Encouraging walking can reduce the number of car journeys made and thus contribute to reducing congestion and pollution levels.

- 7.22 The proposed development would provide no dedicated parking spaces for the proposed office space. It should be noted that the town centre is served by a train station and tram service, where it is only a 5min walk from the site which has recently undergone infrastructure and service improvements. The railway station is well integrated into the town centre. The role of the bus to enhance linkages to the rail stations, as well as its role as a transport mode more generally is also important.
- 7.23 The current site at upper floors has been scarcely used, as such the proposed development would be intensive by comparison. The site is located in the town centre, and therefore in an accessible location. Given its location, with excellent bus links and parking available on surrounding streets and in the surrounding vicinity, and in car parks. As such, although no parking spaces are proposed, this would be sufficient provision for a development in a location as sustainable as this (in a town centre and on a major bus route); as such the parking provided is justified and adheres with the aims of Rochdale Plan.
- 7.24 It is not expected that this proposal would impact negatively upon the surrounding highway network by future occupiers, parking restrictions are in place where poor and awkward parking would be avoided.
- 7.25 As demonstrated, this would be in accordance with Policies of the Councils Local Plan and the NPPF where the proposal would not have a **severe** cumulative impact to warrant refusal of the application.
- 7.26 It is not expected that this proposal would impact negatively upon the surrounding highway network.
- 7.27 Therefore, it is considered the proposed development can safely be provided without resulting in harm to pedestrian and highway safety. The proposed development as

demonstrated would be in accordance with Policies T1 and T2 of the Councils Local Plan and the NPPF where the proposal would not have a severe cumulative impact to warrant refusal of the application.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 It has been demonstrated that the proposed development can be carried out in full compliance with the Council's policies in the adopted Local Plan, including SPD's and the National Planning Policy Framework. The development would provide good quality office space which would bring a positive contribution into the town centre of Rochdale without creating a significant detrimental impact on the amenity of the local occupiers and residents. In addition, the development would bring a portion of an existing property back into an appropriate use.
- 8.2 Given the above, the proposal should be supported in full by the Council.