

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0299
Location: Schofield Close, Milnrow, Rochdale, OL16 3DN
Proposal: Single-storey extension to existing garage/store building.
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises an existing detached garage/storage building situated to the rear of properties fronting Dale Street, Milnrow. Access to the site is obtained via Schofield Close from the rear. The site comprises the existing building, areas of hardstanding used for vehicle parking and manoeuvring, storage areas and limited vegetation.

The application site lies within the Defined Urban Area under saved UDP Policy G/D/1 and within Milnrow District Centre under saved UDP Policy G/S/1. The District Centre designation recognises Milnrow as an established service centre containing a range of commercial, office, retail and community uses.

The site is located to the rear of a group of buildings identified by the Council as Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs), comprising Dale Mill, the former bank building and a row of former weavers' cottages fronting Dale Street.

Planning permission 05/D44914 granted consent for the erection of a replacement storage building with associated parking and security fencing. The approved plans identified the building as providing vehicle storage and material storage. The existing building therefore constitutes an established garage and storage building within the site.

Surrounding land uses are mixed in character. To the southwest lie Nos. 63, 65 and 67 Dale Street, which are predominantly occupied for office and commercial purposes. The first floor of No. 67 comprises a self-contained flat following a grant of planning permission in 2024 (ref: 24/00665/FUL).

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the erection of a single-storey extension to the existing garage/workroom building. The extension would project from the northwest-facing side elevation of the existing building and would result in a large increase in the overall footprint of the structure. The submitted plans indicate that the extended building would continue to operate as a garage/workroom and no material change of use is proposed as part of the application.

RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

24/00665/FUL (67 Dale Street) Change of use of existing first floor office (Class E) to 1 no' 2 bedroom apartment (Use Class C3) including single-storey rear extension and erection of walkway and steps to rear yard area. Approved December 2024.

11/D55013: Erection Of Two Storey Office Building, Together With Associated Car Parking. Approved February 2012.

05/D44914: Erection Of Storage Building With Associated Parking Including 2.5M High Security Fencing. Approved May 2005.

93/D30204 (65 Dale Street) Change Of Use Of Ground Floor To Offices And First And Second Floors To Residential Accommodation. Approved January 1994.

82/D14695: Private Double Garage. Approved January 1983.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) 2024:

JP-P1 – Sustainable Places

JP-P2 – Heritage

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

E1 – Establishing Thriving Towns, Districts and Local Centres

P2 – Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage

P3 – Improving Design of New Development

DM1 – General Development Requirements

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1 – Defined Urban Area

G/S/1 – Hierarchy and Role of Centres

S/6 – District Centres, Local Centres and Linear Commercial Areas

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

'Guidelines & Standards for Residential Development' (2016)

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: 06.09.2026

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: 02.09.2026

Weekly List: 14.09.2026

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

Three representations have been received, comprising one letter of support, one neutral representation and one objection. The comments raise matters relating to the proposed development and the condition and maintenance of Schofield Close, an unadopted access road serving the site. These issues are addressed within the relevant sections of this report.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

N/A

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The application site lies within the Defined Urban Area as designated by saved UDP Policy G/D/1 and within Milnrow District Centre as designated by saved UDP Policy G/S/1. The site comprises an existing garage/storage building occupying previously developed land to the rear of properties fronting Dale Street.

Planning permission ref: 05/D44914 granted consent for the erection of a storage building incorporating vehicle and material storage. The current proposal seeks to extend that building and no material change of use is proposed.

NPPF Policy S3 establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and advises that proposals which accord with the development plan and national decision-making policies should be approved without delay. Policy S4 further states that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies of the Framework.

The site occupies a sustainable urban location within Milnrow District Centre and comprises previously developed land. Policy L2 requires substantial weight to be given to proposals which make effective use of previously developed land and buildings.

The proposal would extend an established building occupying a longstanding position within the site, would utilise previously developed land and would not prejudice the function or vitality of Milnrow District Centre. Subject to the detailed assessment below, the proposal is

considered acceptable in principle and accords with saved UDP Policies G/D/1 and G/S/1, CS Policy DM1 and NPPF Policies S3, S4 and L2.

Character, Appearance and Heritage

CS Policies P3 and DM1 require development to respect local character and respond positively to its surroundings. These objectives are reinforced by NPPF Policy DP3, which requires development proposals to respond to their context and integrate with and enhance their surroundings.

The site lies to the rear of a group of buildings previously identified by the Council as Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs) comprising Dale Mill, the former bank building and former weavers' cottages fronting Dale Street. The significance of these assets is primarily derived from their architectural and historic interest, their relationship with Dale Street and their collective group value.

NPPF Policies HE4 and HE5 require heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and make clear that it is the effect on significance, rather than the scale of development itself, that should be assessed.

The proposed extension would substantially increase the footprint of the existing building. However, the application building occupies a backland position within an established rear service yard environment characterised by hardstanding, storage, parking and ancillary structures. It is largely screened from public views from Dale Street by the frontage buildings and does not form a prominent element within the setting in which the identified heritage assets are typically experienced.

The proposal would not physically affect any heritage asset, would not alter the principal elevations of the identified assets and would not materially affect their significance or appreciation. Having regard to NPPF Policy HE5, it is considered that the proposal would have no adverse effect on the significance of the nearby NDHAs.

NPPF Policy HE7 requires a balanced judgement where development affects a non-designated heritage asset. Given the absence of identified harm, the proposal is considered to preserve the significance of those assets and accords with CS Policies P3 and DM1, PfE Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 and NPPF Policies DP3, HE4, HE5 and HE7.

Residential Amenity

CS Policy DM1 requires development to safeguard the amenity of existing and future occupiers. Similar objectives are contained within NPPF Policy P3, which requires development proposals to provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and users and to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on neighbouring residents and occupiers.

Nos. 63 and 65 Dale Street

Nos. 63 and 65 Dale Street lie to the southwest of the application site and are occupied for commercial purposes, including office accommodation on the upper floors. Whilst the proposal would increase the extent of built development within the rear yard and alter the outlook available from some rear-facing windows, the affected accommodation serves office uses rather than residential accommodation.

Whilst planning permission was granted in 1994 for the conversion of the upper floors of No. 65 Dale Street to residential accommodation, there is no clear evidence before the Local Planning Authority that the permission was implemented and the Council's Gazetteer identifies the premises as commercial office accommodation. Furthermore, it was evident during a site visit that the upper floors are not in residential use. The proposal has therefore been assessed having regard to the existing commercial use of the building rather than the historic planning permission.

Given the established urban context, the existing relationship between the properties and the continued ability of the premises to function for their intended use, the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the occupiers of those premises.

No. 67 Dale Street

The principal residential receptor is the recently approved first-floor flat at No. 67 Dale Street.

During the determination of application 24/00665/FUL, amendments were secured to address the relationship between the proposed flat and the existing outbuilding. The approved rear elevation contains three windows. The westernmost window serves the kitchen whilst the two windows located towards the eastern end of the rear elevation both serve Bedroom 2.

The extension would result in increased enclosure and a reduction in outlook when viewed from the kitchen window. However, the principal bedroom accommodation would remain positioned away from the most affected part of the development and would retain acceptable levels of outlook and natural illumination. It is also material that the relationship between the approved flat and the existing building was specifically considered and amended during the determination of application 24/00665/FUL.

Whilst some reduction in outlook is acknowledged, the impact is not considered so significant as to result in unacceptable harm to living conditions.

Noise and Disturbance

The proposal would enlarge the building; however, no material change of use is proposed. The planning history demonstrates that the building was approved and constructed as a storage building and the application has been determined on that basis.

NPPF Policy P4 advises that existing businesses and activities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed upon them as a consequence of development approved after they were established. The existing building predates the recently approved residential accommodation at No. 67 Dale Street and forms part of the established character of the locality.

There is no substantive evidence before the Local Planning Authority that the proposal would result in a materially different use of the building or a level of activity that would justify refusal. The application must therefore be determined on the basis of the development proposed rather than speculative future scenarios.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with CS Policy DM1, PfE Policy JP-P1, the Residential Development SPD and NPPF Policies P3 and P4.

Highway Safety

CS Policy DM1 seeks to ensure satisfactory access and highway safety arrangements. Similar requirements are contained within NPPF Policies TR3 and TR4.

The proposal would continue to utilise the existing access arrangements from Schofield Close and no alterations to the means of access are proposed. One representation has been received raising concerns that increased use of the building could contribute to the deterioration of the surface of Schofield Close, which is an unadopted road. This concern has been noted. However, the proposal does not involve a material change of use and there is no evidence before the Local Planning Authority that the development would generate a significant increase in vehicle movements or result in a severe impact upon the local highway network.

Furthermore, the development would not prejudice existing parking, manoeuvring or servicing arrangements within the site. Whilst the maintenance and repair of the unadopted access road is primarily a private matter for those with a legal interest in the road, there is no substantive evidence that the proposal would give rise to highway safety concerns sufficient to justify withholding planning permission.

The proposal is therefore acceptable in highway safety terms and accords with CS Policy DM1 and NPPF Policies TR3 and TR4.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

The application site comprises previously developed land occupied by an existing building, hardstanding and storage areas. Site inspections did not identify any priority habitat within the application site.

NPPF Policy N2 requires development proposals to consider the environmental qualities of land and identify opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Development should only be refused where significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or compensated for.

Having regard to the nature of the site and the scale of the proposal, no protected species concerns are identified and no significant adverse ecological impacts are anticipated.

The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations have also been considered. The application site falls below 0.2 hectares in area and no priority habitat was identified during the site inspection. The development is therefore exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and a Biodiversity Gain Plan is not required.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in ecological terms and accords with NPPF Policy N2 and CS Policy DM1.

Conclusion

The proposal represents the extension of an established garage/storage building on previously developed land within the Defined Urban Area and Milnrow District Centre.

The proposal accords with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in NPPF Policy S3 and the principle of development within settlements established by Policy S4. The proposal would make effective use of previously developed land in accordance with Policy

L2 and would not result in unacceptable impacts in respect of design, heritage, neighbouring amenity, highway safety or ecology.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with the development plan and the relevant national decision-making policies of the NPPF and approval is recommended subject to appropriate planning conditions.

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

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

Human Rights and Public Sector Equality Duty

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

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Local Planning Authority under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application. In particular due regard has been afforded to the need to:

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

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

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

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (3)

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

Drg.No. JK / 2209 _ 001. Rev A

Drg.No. JK / 2209 _ 002. Rev A

Drg.No. JK / 2209 _ 003. Rev A

Drg.No. JK / 2209 _ 004

Design Access Statement. Rev A 17.04.2026

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan, the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The materials used in the construction of the exterior of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the construction of the exterior of the existing building in colour, form, type, size and texture.

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, Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.

