

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Lake Garage, Smithy Bridge Road, Littleborough, OL15 0BQ
Erection of SPAR store

December 2016



JAMES HALL & CO
— ESTD • 1863 —

smith&love
PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement relates to a full planning application by James Hall and Co. Ltd for the erection of a convenience store (Class A1), ATM machine, car parking, external lighting and associated works, following demolition of the existing building at Lake Garage, Smithy Bridge Road, Littleborough. The store will be operated by SPAR.
- 1.2 This proposal is part of a wider programme of store development by James Hall/SPAR prompted by an increase in demand for local convenience top-up shopping facilities close to where people live.
- 1.3 This statement describes the site and its surroundings; the site's planning history; describes the proposal; sets out the approach taken to the design and access strategy; summarises the relevant planning policies and assesses the proposals against planning policy.
- 1.4 In addition to the application drawings the application submission comprises the following documents:
 - Transport Statement - PSA Design
 - Phase I/II Site Investigation and Coal Mining Risk Assessment – Geo2 Remediation
 - Ecological Survey and Assessment including licensed bat survey – ERAP
 - Energy and Sustainability Report - Energy Rating Services
- 1.5 As the supporting documents demonstrate there are no overriding technical constraints that would prevent development in the manner proposed. The proposed development is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Development Plan. It is considered that the proposed development is appropriate in terms of its land use, scale, design and layout. As a consequence, a presumption in favour of development should be applied.

2 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises a commercial use at Smithy Bridge Road, Littleborough known as Lake Garage. The site frontage extends along Smithy Bridge Road with an overall site area of approximately 0.15 hectares. The site is currently occupied by a car sales company and MOT/car repair garage. There is a large single storey building occupying the main part of the site with car sales areas to the front of the building with further outdoor vehicle storage areas to the rear of the building adjacent to residential properties (see Figures 1 and 2 below). The site boundaries are currently defined by a low brick wall to the front and concrete panel and timber fencing to the rear and side boundaries.



Figure 1: Site Location
(Source: Google Maps)



Figure 2. View of site from Smithy Bridge Road
(Source: Google Maps)

- 2.2 The site lies approximately 1.4km to the south west of Littleborough town centre with a small local shopping area lying some 75m to west of the site. Opposite the site are residential properties and a Public Library. Further residential properties are located to the remaining

boundaries of the site with terraced properties separated by garden areas to the west and further residential properties and gardens to the south at Shaftesbury Avenue.

- 2.3 Access to the site is currently gained directly from two access points on Smithy Bridge Road.
- 2.4 There are regular bus services which run past the site with bus stops located in both directions within easy walking distance of the site for travel to and between Littleborough and Rochdale. A train station is located approximately 500m to the west of the site with train services to Manchester, Blackburn, Wigan and Leeds.

3 Planning History

3.1 The planning history of the site is set out in the table below:

Planning application	Description	Decision	Date
98/D35351	Single storey extension to garage to provide workshop and storeroom	Granted	8/7/98
86/D19298	Outline application for residential	Approved	24/7/86
80/D11101	Outline application for residential	Unknown	Unknown

4 The Proposal

- 4.1 The proposal comprises the erection of a convenience store (Class A1) with car parking and associated works to be operated by SPAR. The convenience store has a gross floor area of 455sq. metres and a net retail sales area of 280sq. metres. The store will open 7 days a week - 6am to 11pm – to enable it to serve its purpose as a convenience store.
- 4.2 An extract of the site layout plan is shown in Figure 3 below with the convenience store to the rear of the site and access and car parking from Smithy Bridge Road.

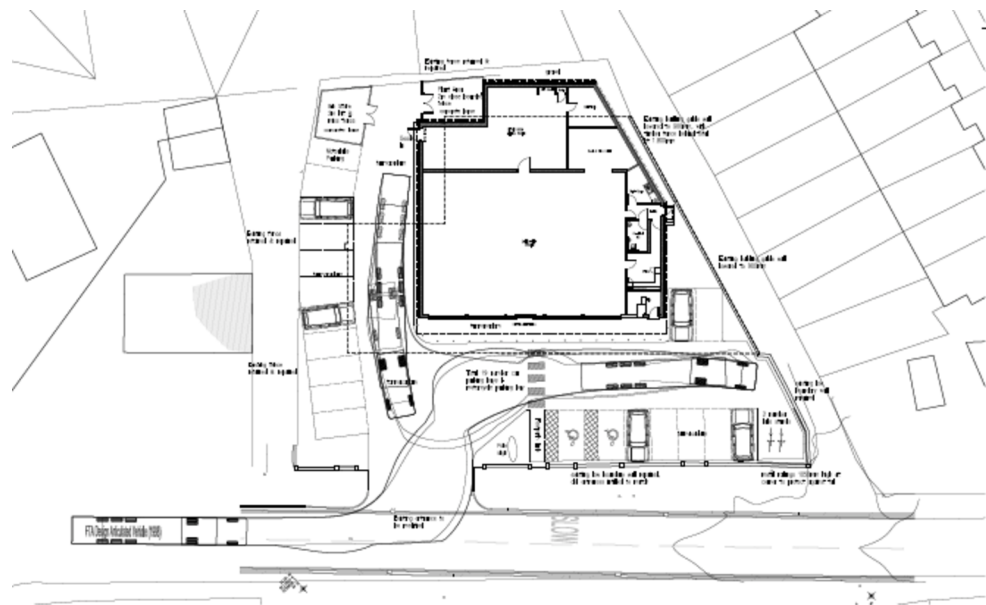


Figure 3: Extract of Proposed Site Layout Plan

- 4.3 The store is contemporary in its appearance with a fully glazed shop front and flat sloping roof. Windows and doors are finished in a grey powder coated aluminum.
- 4.4 The proposed convenience store will be serviced by upgrading the existing southern access from Smithy Bridge Road with the other existing access being closed. The access will have good visibility in both directions along Smithy Bridge Road providing safe and convenient access for customers.
- 4.5 The Proposed Site Layout Plan shows the swept path analysis of the largest delivery vehicle and demonstrates that this type of vehicle can satisfactorily enter and leave the site in a forward direction and without conflict with car parking spaces. The store will receive 1-2 deliveries a day by an articulated vehicle. Each delivery takes approximately 30 minutes during which time the engine is switched off. In addition, deliveries of fresh produce (e.g. bread and milk) and newspapers are made daily by small vans. Each delivery takes approximately 5 – 10 minutes. Deliveries will take place between the hours of 6am to 9pm Monday to Sunday.

4.6 Waste and recycling bins are stored externally to the rear southern corner of the site and are screened by a timber fence. Waste and recycling is collected by a James Hall contractor.

4.7 External lighting is required to ensure the safety of customers on site and this will be provided to meet the requirements of the Planning Department through the submission of a detailed scheme via an appropriately worded planning condition.

The Applicant

4.8 James Hall and Company Ltd is a Lancashire based family business founded in 1881. In 1956 the Company became part of the SPAR symbol group and James Hall and Co is now a wholesaler and distributor for SPAR serving over 540 stores in the north of England with over 800 staff.

The Operator

4.9 SPAR is the world's largest international food retail chain with over 12,000 stores in 36 countries and was introduced in the UK in 1956 employing over 50,000 people and serving more than 2,400 stores with a turnover in excess of £3 billion.

4.10 SPAR is a 'symbol' group, which means individual SPAR members retain their independence but enjoy the advantages of belonging to a global brand including collective buying and marketing power with a strong corporate image and back up resources.

4.11 People are increasingly tending to do one big shop in store (with the Discount Chains notably Aldi and Lidl increasingly popular) or on-line every week or fortnight and then topping up at convenience stores. There is an ageing population with older people tending to like shops close by as well as more single households, who often buy little and often. As a consequence, the market share of local Convenience Stores and Discounters is growing rapidly.

4.12 The SPAR range comprises a limited selection of goods in the following categories:

- seasonal fruit and vegetable lines;
- general tinned, bottled and pre-packed groceries;
- frozen and chilled goods;
- beers, wines and spirits;
- pre-packed bread, morning goods and cakes;
- everyday non-food household items;
- local and regional sourcing of products particularly for fresh produce and bakery goods;
- newspaper and magazines;
- greeting cards, cigarettes and lottery products; and
- flowers

4.13 SPAR stores do not offer a butchery, fishmonger or greengrocery service or other concessions as are frequently found in larger stores. As a result, SPAR stores do not compete directly with local specialist food shops or durable goods retailers.

4.14 SPAR customers generally use other shops and stores as well as SPAR in order to fulfil their weekly grocery shopping and local service needs. SPAR is, therefore, complementary to the existing pattern of trading in existing centres.

5 Design and Access

5.1 This section of the Planning, Design and Access Statement seeks to establish the design principles for the development taking into account local and national planning policy and guidance.

5.2 This section will:

- identify the key issues and opportunities offered by the site; and
- provide comprehensive information on the development in terms of use, amount, layout, scale and appearance.

Design Objectives

5.3 There are several design parameters which have influenced the proposals – the adjacent land uses, the site's topography and the need to create safe access/egress for vehicle users and pedestrians.

5.4 Adjacent uses are predominantly residential – 2 storey houses comprising a variety of house types, materials and styles. The overall form and design should reflect the function of the store and the era within which it is proposed to be built. It should also be easy to maintain and retains its appearance over time. It should also reflect the domestic scale of nearby properties.

5.5 Furthermore, the nature of the use will attract customers on foot, by cycle and by car which means that all customers must be accommodated safely whilst on site and on entering and leaving.

Use

5.6 The proposal comprises the development of a SPAR convenience store (Use Class A1) and the demolition of the existing car sales/garage building.

Amount

5.7 The site extends to approximately 0.15 hectares and is to comprise a convenience store of 455 sq. m gross and 280 sq. m net sales area.

5.8 Car parking is provided for 19 spaces including two accessible space and 2 cycle parking stands adjacent to the front of the site.

Layout

5.9 A number of site layouts were produced in order to identify a layout that was achievable, viable, practical, safe for all users and desirable in urban design terms. In order to create a safe environment for customers, whilst accommodating service vehicles, the store is

positioned towards the rear of the site. As a result, the main store frontage is set back from Smithy Bridge Road with car parking and access to the front creating a more open area to the main road. The proposed layout is similar to the existing site layout.

Access

- 5.10 The development will provide a single access point from Smithy Bridge Road into the site which is suitable to accommodate delivery vehicles as well as customer vehicle movements.
- 5.11 Car parking is provided for 19 vehicles including two accessible space and provision is made at the front of the site for 2 cycle stands.

Appearance and scale

- 5.12 Visual interest is created to the store frontage through the use of a low level brickwork plinth with a glazed frontage and doors and window frames finished in dark grey powder coated aluminum. An ATM is also provided which will be monitored by CCTV.
- 5.13 Care has been taken to create a high quality development though the use of high quality durable materials. The figures below show the proposed elevation details.
- 5.14 The proposed height of the store is between 6.15m and 6.45m metres to the front of the store and 4.15 metres to the rear. The building's mass is broken up by the use of a sloping roof as opposed to a traditional pitched roof. By positioning the store to the rear of the site the applicant is able to take advantage of the lower land levels towards the rear of the site.

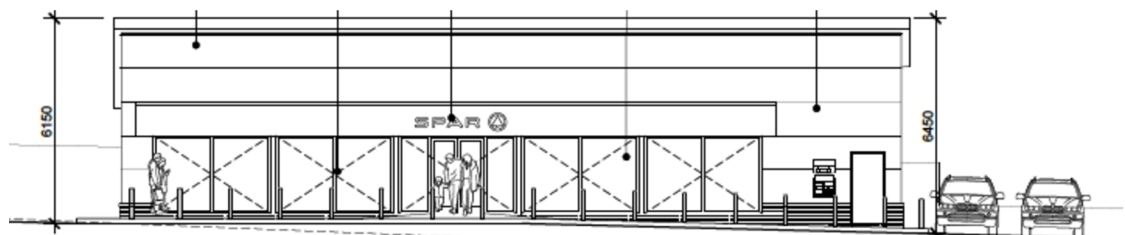


Figure 4: Front Elevation

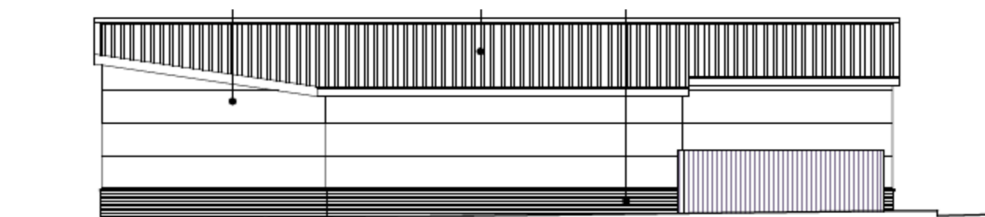


Figure 5: Rear Elevation

Proposed convenience store
Smithy Bridge Road, Littleborough

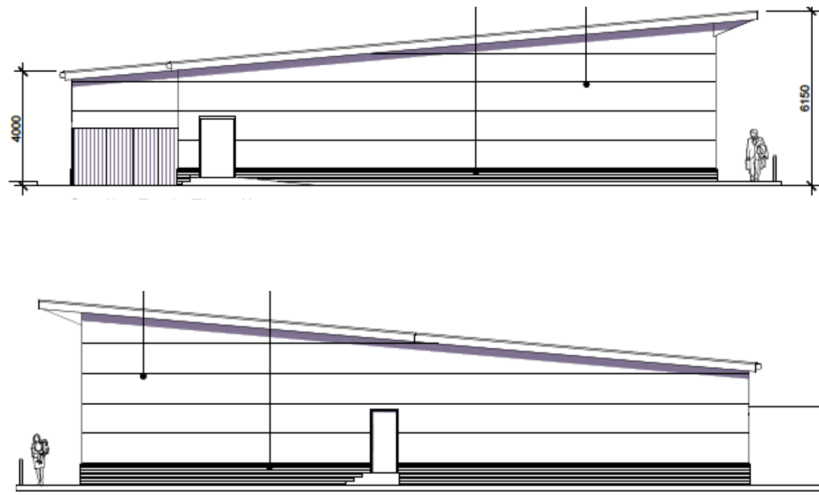


Figure 6: Side Elevations

Summary

5.15 It has been shown that care has been taken at the design stage to create a building which respects the scale and appearance of its surroundings. Consideration has been given to the safe movement of vehicles onto and off the site. The swept path on the proposed site plan shows that service vehicles can be accommodated safely and that the development's parking requirements can be met on site without the need for on street parking.

6 Planning Policy Context

- 6.1 Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the Development Plan comprises the approved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and the recently adopted Rochdale Core Strategy.
- 6.2 Other key local and national policies and guidance that should be considered in the decision making process include the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) relevant to retail development.

Development Plan

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (June 2006)

- 6.3 The Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in June 2006 and sets out the overall strategic direction for the area. Certain policies were 'saved' on 13th May 2009.
- 6.4 The site is without notation or allocation on the UDP proposals map as shown at Figure 7 below:

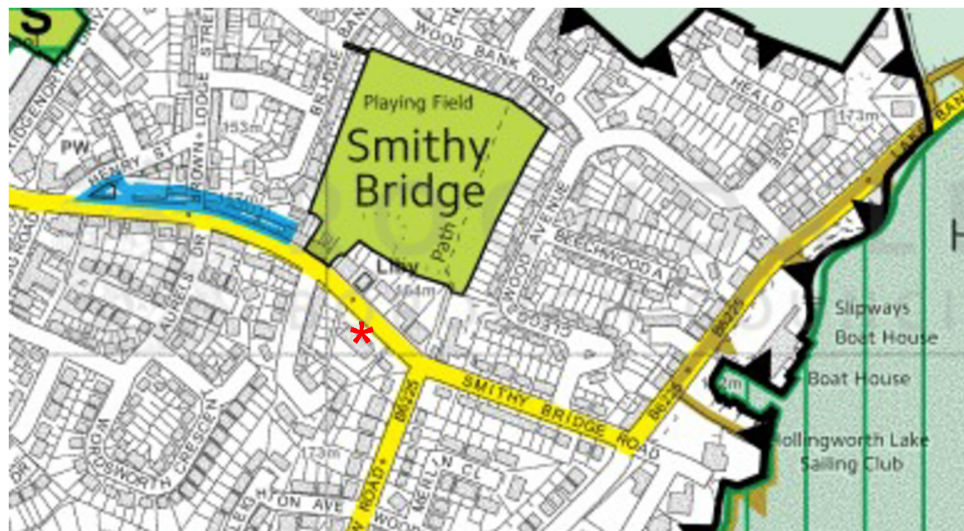


Figure 7: Extract of UDP Proposal Map (Application site *)

- 6.5 *Policy G/S/1 Hierarchy and role of centres* - sets out the principal locations and hierarchy for shopping and other main town centre uses including those of main town centre (Rochdale), town centres (including Littleborough) with local centres defined in an appendix. This includes a local centre at Smithy Bridge Road. New retail development should follow the sequential approach according to the retail hierarchy set out in the policy. In the reasoned justification, out of centre sites away from existing retail provision will only be considered where there are no sequentially preferable site available and in locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport and preferably close to a centre that the development

- could link with. This policy should also be read in conjunction with Core Strategy Policy E1.
- 6.6 *Policy S/6 District centre, local centres and linear commercial areas* - requires applicants for retail developments over 500 sq. metres gross to demonstrate the sequential approach to site selection in order to demonstrate that no other suitable sites that are sequentially preferable are available. This policy should also be read in conjunction with Core Strategy Policy E1.
- 6.7 *Policy EM/7 Development and Flood Risk* - sets out the criteria for development in flood risk areas or where development could contribute to increasing flood risk. Policy EM/8 seeks to prevent risks to surface and ground water quality and new developments are expected to make satisfactory arrangements for drainage. This policy should also be read in conjunction with Core Strategy Policy G8.

Core Strategy (Adopted October 2016)

- 6.8 The Core Strategy has, in the most part, replaced the UDP policies and provides the development strategy that will guide new developments in the Borough up to 2026.
- 6.9 *Policy SD1 Delivering Sustainable Development* - reiterates the aims of national planning policy in relation to the consideration and determination of planning applications.
- 6.10 *Policy SP1* sets out Rochdale's role in the city region whilst *Policy SP2* sets out the spatial strategy for the borough and defines the sites' location as being within the Pennine fringe where new housing, employment and commercial development will be allowed where it is appropriate to the accessibility and character of the Pennine fringe.
- 6.11 *Policy E1 Establishing thriving town, district and local centres* - states that the borough's town centres will be the focus for retail, cultural, office and residential development to promote their vitality and viability. There will be a hierarchy of accessible district and local centres and shops that meet people's daily shopping needs. In considering proposals for main town centre uses there is a requirement for the application of a sequential approach where a proposal is not in accordance with an up to date development plan; an impact assessment is required for proposals above 500sq.m near District/Local Centres. Proposals will be supported where they support the provision of small scale shops and services to meet local needs outside centres where they are in a location that is not reasonably served by an existing centre or local shop; there are no suitable vacant shops nearby and they will be accessible to local residents on foot.
- 6.12 *Policy E2 Increasing Jobs and Prosperity* - supports employment generating uses including retail.

- 6.13 *Policy P1 Improving Image* - sets out requirements to achieve high quality design in new developments; incorporating public art where appropriate; landscaping; and promoting development of under used land and buildings.
- 6.14 *Policy P2 Protecting and enhancing character* - landscape and heritage, seeks to protect and enhance the borough's character through integrating with natural features such as river valleys; protecting important views of hills and valleys; conserving and enhancing townscape character; and protecting the borough's heritage such as listed buildings, and non-statutory heritage assets.
- 6.15 *Policy P3 Improving design of new development* - requires new development to achieve high standards of design; enhancing the borough's identity by respecting context and considering scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscaping, materials and access; ensuring buildings contribute positively to townscape and incorporate measures to design out crime; provide an appropriate mix of uses; accessible for all; the intended function of the building is easily understood with visible entrances; adaptability of buildings for future needs; minimising the impact on, and adapting to climate change; designing buildings and spaces so quality and appearance can be maintained and landscaping to improve the visual impact of car parking.
- 6.16 *Policy G1 Tackling and adapting to climate change* – seeks to ensure growth is located in areas that minimise the need to travel, whilst expecting new development to be zero carbon in line with national targets and require the minimum amount of energy to function over their lifetime and address the issues of climate change including; urban greening; where possible use of water features; use of sustainable drainage systems; retention of trees and planting new trees; incorporation of green roofs where possible.
- 6.17 *Policy G2 Energy and new development* - expects all new development to follow the energy hierarchy and meet national policy and targets for demand reduction; energy efficiency; and possible use of developer contributions in circumstances where demand reduction or energy efficiency are not addressed.
- 6.18 *Policy G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity* - states that development should protect existing biodiversity; protect existing features such as trees and hedges; and take opportunities to promote biodiversity.
- 6.19 *Policy G8 Managing water resources and flood risk* - requires that new development does not lead to any form of increased flooding or impedes natural water or flood risk management.
- 6.20 *Policy G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability* - development

should not have impacts that lead to unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution.

- 6.21 *Policy T1 Delivering sustainable transport* - sets out the spatial strategy for transport improvements and reducing pollution. This includes provision of park and ride facilities including at Smithy Bridge railway station.
- 6.22 *Policy T2 Improving Accessibility* - sets out accessibility criteria, thresholds of development requiring a Transport Assessment; and makes reference to the Council's parking standards.
- 6.23 *Policy DM1 General development requirements* - brings together the above policies to ensure development presents high quality design including landscaping and crime prevention; protects residential amenity; mitigates against any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution, traffic generation and inadequate access; provides satisfactory vehicular parking with adequate parking, manoeuvring and servicing arrangements; mitigates any land contamination issues or instability; and provides for local needs, such as local shops.

Emerging Land Allocations Plan

- 6.24 This document will identify specific sites for development. It is at an early stage of preparation with no implications for the proposed development.

Emerging Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

- 6.25 The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) will provide an overarching plan that will set out the scale and distribution for housing and employment and cover the whole of the Greater Manchester area. It is at an early stage of preparation with no implications for the proposed development.

Littleborough Neighbourhood Plan

- 6.26 This plan will consider the locality and the development and use of land and can include non-land use matters. This plan is at an early stage of preparation with no implications for the proposed development.

Retail and Leisure Study (2010)

- 6.27 The Retail and Town Centre Study has been produced by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners on behalf of Rochdale MDC and informs the Core Strategy. This study provides the base for quantitative and qualitative capacity for additional retail provision in Rochdale and for defining impact thresholds.

Supplementary Planning Documents

6.28 Other guidance for new development in Rochdale is also considered against adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). Those relevant to the proposed development include:

Shopfronts and Security Shutters SPD (September 2012)

6.29 This SPD provides advice intended to strike a balance between security and visual impact. It provides guidance in respect of the design of shop fronts and associated advertisements and security measures, outlines good practice and principles of good design.

Urban Design Guidance (September 2007)

6.30 This SPD sets out four overall aims that are essential to creating successful places including:

- sustainable development that is environmentally responsible, minimising consumption non-renewable resources;
- community development that provides for a greater sense of involvement in planning;
- inclusive and safe development that is as accessible as possible to all; and
- attractive development that is fit-for-purpose.

6.31 It also sets out principles of good urban design which can be achieved through considerations of character: safety and inclusion; diversity; ease of movement; legibility; adaptability; sustainability; designing for future maintenance; designing buildings and spaces so that their quality can be maintained over time; good streets and spaces; and well designed buildings.

Design and Planning Process – A Guide to Good Practice (September 2007)

6.32 This SPD accompanies the above Urban Design SPD and sets out the requirements to be taken into account in designing schemes and the format of Design and Access Statements.

Climate Change Adaptation SPD (June 2012)

6.33 This SPD outlines actions for developments to help climate change adaptation under eight broad headings: location, layout and orientation, construction materials / structure, environmental performance and recycling, green roofs and walls, rainwater harvesting and water efficiency, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and green and blue infrastructure (landscaping and water features).

Energy and New Development SPD (May 2008)

6.34 This SPD provides further guidance to supplement UDP policies and respond to requirements laid out in national and regional guidance (as at 2008) to promote and

encourage energy efficiency in new developments including maximising energy efficiency through construction, design and use of passive and renewable technologies and reduce predicted carbon emissions through the use of on-site renewable technologies.

Biodiversity and Development SPD (January 2008)

- 6.35 This SPD sets out good practice for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the design, construction and future use of development to ensure development proposals provide appropriate protection, mitigation and enhancement of the natural environment and urban and rural biodiversity through design, construction and future management of physical regeneration activities. Advice is also given on the undertaking of ecological surveys.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.36 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies for the planning system and how it expects them to be applied positively and pro-actively to deliver sustainable growth and new development to meet objectively assessed needs.
- 6.37 It confirms that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations including the Framework indicate otherwise, and that due weight should be given to development plan policies according to their consistency with the Framework. Weight can also be afforded to emerging development plans according to their stage of preparation, the number of unresolved objections against them and the degree of consistency with the Framework.

Sustainable development

- 6.38 The Ministerial foreword states the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and that development which is sustainable, should go ahead without delay. Paragraph 7 confirms the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and states these are inter-dependent and should not be treated in isolation in the consideration of planning issues.
- 6.39 Paragraph 14 explains that a presumption in favour of sustainable development lies at the heart of the Framework, which for decision taking means;
- “approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay”, and; “Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date granting planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or its specific policies indicate development should be restricted.”*

6.40 Paragraph 17 sets out 12 key principles which planning should seek to underpin plan making and decision taking. These include criteria to:

- *Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the ...businesses that the country needs;*
- *Promoting the vitality of our main urban areas and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth;*
- *Deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs;*
- *Seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity;*
- *Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land); and*
- *Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable*

6.41 The general perspective from 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 and also promote a strong and competitive economy.

Ensuring the vitality of town centres

6.42 The NPPF states that a sequential test should be applied to planning applications for the development of main town centre uses that are not in a town centre. When considering proposals on edge of centre sites and out of centre sites preference should be given to accessible and well - connected sites.

6.43 Paragraph 25 states that this approach should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development.

6.44 When assessing applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floor space threshold, if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500 sq. m. The impact on consumer choice, vitality and viability and trade in the town centre should be considered.

Promoting sustainable transport

6.45 Section 4 of the NPPF promotes sustainable transport. Paragraph 34 states that:

“Plans and decisions should ensure that developments that generate significant

movement are located where the need to travel is minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximized.”

Requiring Good Design

6.46 The NPPF at section 7 considers design matters and confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment (paragraph 56). Paragraph 58 lists a number of design criteria which Local Planning Authorities should ensure developments address and supplemented by paragraph 60 which provides general advice on design and states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to reinforce local distinctiveness”.

6.47 Sections 10 and 11 of the NPPF outline how local authorities should promote development which minimizes the impacts of climate change, reduce flood risks and enhance and encourage biodiversity opportunities in and around developments.

Noise

6.48 The NPPF goes on to state in Paragraph 123 “planning policies and decisions should aim to:

- *Avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development;*
- *Mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including thorough use of conditions;*
- *Recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land use since they were established, and*
- *Identify and protect areas of tranquility which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value”.*

7 Appraisal

- 7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 refers to the development plan as a whole and requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.2 The planning issues to be considered in determining the planning application include the consideration of the principle of retail development in this location and the assessment of technical issues.

The principle of retail development

- 7.3 The application site is currently in commercial use with a planning history for commercial uses including car sales and car repairs within the residential area.
- 7.4 The proposed convenience store has a net sales area of just 280 sq. m which is within the parameters of a small store under the Sunday Trading Act 1994. The convenience store will meet the day to day needs of local residents within the immediate area and will also attract passing trade.
- 7.5 The proposal, and the applicant's development of a number of such convenience stores in the north of England, follow well documented changes in consumer shopping patterns. There is a trend towards the use of discount food stores and alongside this an increase in the use of local convenience stores. A reduction in the number of people undertaking a weekly 'big shop' has resulted in an increase in the development of new local convenience stores within residential areas facilitating more sustainable shopping patterns and supporting social inclusion for those without private transport. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to take account of expanding business sectors in both policy and decision making. The Local Convenience Sector falls into this category.
- 7.6 There is no requirement for an impact test in this case because the store is less than 500sqm (see Policy E1).
- 7.7 UDP Policy S6 and Core Strategy Policy E1 support local needs shops. A sequential test is required for proposals for main town centre uses that are not located in centre.
- 7.8 In national and local retail policy terms the site occupies an edge of centre location – a location that is well connected and up to 300m of the primary shopping area. The application site lies 75m from the linear centre of Smithy Bridge. Smithy Bridge comprises a number of shops and services including a small food store, hot food takeaways and pharmacy.



Figure 7: Extract of UDP Proposals Map

- 7.9 When considering alternative sites in and on the edge of Smithy Bridge sites were assessed on the basis of their size, suitability and availability. Smithy Bridge is a tightly defined centre and one which is also tightly contained by residential properties. No vacant retail/commercial properties or sites were identified within the boundary of the local centre.
- 7.10 The site search did not extend beyond Smithy Bridge because to relocate the store to another area would not meet the day to day needs of the residential catchment that this convenience store is intended to serve.
- 7.11 In conclusion in relation to the sequential test, no sites or opportunities were found for the proposed store to be accommodated within the designated local centre.
- 7.12 The principle of retail development providing a convenience role in this location is acceptable and in accordance with the NPPF, saved retail policies and the adopted Core Strategy.

Design, character and appearance

- 7.13 There is a requirement to submit a Design and Access Statement with this planning application and this is provided at Section 5. Briefly, the proposal comprises a single storey building on a site with residential properties to the boundaries.
- 7.14 The new store will have a contemporary appearance and due to the low level store design and orientation it will remain domestic in scale and respect neighbouring properties.
- 7.15 Materials used are sympathetic to the adjacent properties whilst providing a modern building suitable for commercial use. A full description of materials is given on the submitted elevation plans and include low level brickwork plinth, grey cladding panels and substantial glazed areas to the front of the building to provide an attractive shopfront.
- 7.16 A safe and secure environment is provided that reduces the opportunities for crime

particularly through the use of natural surveillance from the car parking areas and glazed shopfront areas as well as the use of CCTV and external lighting.

7.17 Accordingly, the design, layout and appearance are considered to be acceptable having regard to Core Strategy policies and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents.

Technical matters

7.18 There are a number of technical matters to consider in developing the site. These include land contamination, noise, ecology and access.

Land Contamination

7.19 The planning application submission is accompanied by a Phase I/II Environmental Assessment by Geo² Remediation Report. The report identifies that the site has historically been used as a car sales and repair garage and that contamination on site may still exist from the existing and former uses. The report concludes following intrusive testing, that no significant contaminants have been identified and with no likely impact on surface waters, neighbouring site users or future site users. A watching brief is recommended during the construction phase to deal with any unexpected contaminant found on the site.

7.20 Accordingly, the proposal complies with Core Strategy Policy G9.

Ecology

7.21 The planning submission is accompanied by an Ecological Survey and Assessment including a licensed bat survey by ERAP. The building and area were surveyed for ecological habitats and potential bat activity. No plant or animal species of ecological note were found and no bats or signs of bat roosts were detected anywhere within the building. The habitats within the site surrounding the building are of poor suitability for use by foraging and commuting bats and the presence of roosting bats in the building is discounted. The report recommends that no further surveys are required but that the presence of nesting birds should be taken into account during the construction phase and the necessary surveys undertaken if construction were to take place during the bird breeding season.

7.22 Accordingly, the proposal complies with Core Strategy Policy G7.

Access, highway safety and parking

7.23 The application is supported by a Transport Statement prepared by PSA Design Ltd which meets the requirements of Core Strategy policies regarding transport and car parking matters.

7.24 The Transport Statement demonstrates that for a store of the size proposed vehicle

- movements to/from the site can be accommodated without any detrimental impact on the local highway network with regard to visibility, traffic movements and highway safety. The submitted layout provides space for pedestrian access/egress to the store, customer car parking and goods deliveries.
- 7.25 The application site enjoys good accessibility by bus services along Smithy Bridge Road and lies within the residential catchment which it is intended to serve and which are in easy walking distance.
- 7.26 Safe access and egress is proposed from Smithy Bridge Road utilising an existing access point with good visibility for vehicles entering and leaving the site.
- 7.27 The level of on-site car parking provided is considered wholly adequate taking into account the proportion of walk in business and the extent of dwell time for those customers arriving by car.
- 7.28 The Transport Statement shows that the introduction of a new food store does not necessarily result in new vehicle trips on the local highway network. Some trips to the new store will already be travelling on the local highway network either passing or routeing close to the site. It is likely that the store will generate approximately 9 and 14 new trips on the local road network in the AM and PM peak hours respectively. This volume of new trips on the road network will not have a severe impact on the operation of the local road network, particularly taking into account the trip generation of the previous uses.
- 7.29 The submitted Transport Statement concludes that a development comprising a SPAR convenience store will not have a material impact in terms of highway operation and safety.

Residential Amenity

- 7.30 The proposed layout, scale and design of the development takes account of the proximity of residential properties.
- 7.31 The SPAR opening and servicing operation is described in Section 4 of this report, with the store opening 7 days a week from 06.00 until 23.00. Vehicle deliveries are few in number and are set back from the delivery area by the customer car park in this area. An articulated vehicle will deliver ambient, frozen and chilled goods to the store approximately 1-2 times a day. In addition, small vans will visit the store on a daily basis to deliver fresh produce such as bread and milk. The engine of the articulated lorry is switched off during the delivery and the operation takes approximately 30 minutes. Deliveries by small vans typically take 5-10 minutes with goods carried from the back of the vehicle into the store via either the stores' side door or front door whichever is most convenient.
- 7.32 It has been demonstrated that the development can accommodate a safe access and egress and sufficient parking is provided on site to serve the development without encouraging on

street parking and the potential for noise. The SPAR servicing regime is operated by the applicant and there is a dedicated, screened service area. This, together with the hours of use and minimal deliveries, ensure that no adverse impact will result for neighbouring residents. As a consequence, the proposed development fully complies with Core Strategy Policies T1 and T2.

Energy and sustainability

7.33 At the request of the local planning authority an Energy and Sustainability Report has been prepared by Energy Rating Services. Despite there being no target for energy reduction in the Core Strategy the report shows that by enhancing the thermal performance of the store, beyond Part L 2013 Building Regulations, incorporating a heat Pump HWS Installation augmented by a Solar PV array that an overall energy reduction can be achieved of 13% against the figure determined by the notional building. On this basis, the proposal can demonstrate an energy reduction in accordance with Core Strategy Policy G2.

Other material considerations

7.34 It has been shown that the proposed development is in accordance with the NPPF and the development plan. Additional matters to be taken into consideration in determining the planning application include job creation and the potential for the new store to reduce the need for local residents to travel for top up shopping purposes.

7.35 The development will create jobs in construction and, when operational, will create 30 new jobs – 15 full time and 15 part time jobs – in the store. As a local business James Hall & Co. will recruit locally.

7.36 The provision of a local needs convenience store in this location will reduce the need for local residents to travel to meet their day to day shopping needs, particularly at evenings and weekends.

8 Summary & Conclusions

- 8.1 The proposal comprises a full planning application for the erection of a SPAR local convenience store, ATM machine, car parking, external lighting and associated works, following demolition of the existing garage building on the site at Smithy Bridge Road, Littleborough.
- 8.2 The SPAR store, at just 280 sq. m net retail sales area, will meet the day to day convenience shopping needs of local residents without the need to travel further afield.
- 8.3 Particular care has been taken to position the store on the site so as to provide adequate space for operational purposes and to maintain the residential amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 8.4 The site's redevelopment will enhance its appearance and the street scene in this location through the provision of a contemporary building of an appropriate scale. There are no suitable sequentially preferable sites and the proposal will not result in an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of any defined centres, largely due to its scale and purpose, predominantly meeting the day to day needs of local residents.
- 8.5 There are environmental, economic and social benefits associated with redevelopment which have been set out in Section 7, including job creation.
- 8.6 It has been demonstrated that the proposal fully complies with national and local planning policies, particularly those relating to retail, design and amenity. A presumption in favour of development can therefore be applied.