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WM. MORRISON CONVENIENCE STORES LTD

PROPOSED PARTIAL CHANGE OF USE OF AN EXISTING RETAIL UNIT TO MOT/CAR SERVICING CENTRE FOR HALFORDS AUTOCENTRE AT 271 PALANTINE ROAD, NORTHENDEN, MANCHESTER

PLANNING STATEMENT

MAY 2012

Peacock & Smith Limited
Suite 9C
Joseph's Well
Hanover Walk
Leeds
LS3 1AB
T: 0113 243 1919
F: 0113 242 2198
E: planning@peacockandsmith.co.uk
www.peacockandsmith.co.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.01 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application to change the use of part of the 'United Carpets and Beds' retail unit at 271 Palatine Road, Northenden from Class A1 retail to Class B2 for use as a car servicing and MOT centre, to be operated by 'Halfords Autocentre'.

1.02 The existing retail unit has a floor area of approximately 750 sq. m and has recently been acquired by Wm Morrison Convenience Store Ltd (a subsidiary company of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc), who plan to subdivide the unit to create:

- An 'M Local' convenience store trading from 445 sq. m of the unit, fronting onto Palatine Road; and
- A 'Halfords Autocentre' car servicing and MOT centre trading from the remaining 305 sq. m of the unit at the rear of the unit.

1.03 As set out in Section 3, the unit can be used for the sale of convenience goods without the need for planning permission. The current planning application therefore seeks permission for:

i) a change of use of part of the unit to allow for a car servicing and MOT centre; and
ii) minor external changes to the unit, including a new door and window for the car servicing centre.

1.04 The proposal will create 25 new jobs (18 full time equivalent), of which 20 would in the M Local store and 5 in the Halfords Autocentre.

Structure of the Report

1.05 This Report is written in sections with the remainder as follows:

- Section 2: provides a description of the site, its location and the proposal
- Section 3: provides a planning history of the site
- Section 4: summarises the salient elements of the planning policy context against which the proposal should be assessed
- Section 5: provides an analysis of the planning issues and a conclusion.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION, LOCATION AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Site Description and Location

2.01 As shown on plan in **Appendix 1**, the application site is an existing small-scale (750 sq. m gross) retail store with associated car park, located at 271 Palatine Road in Northenden.

2.02 The single storey unit is currently occupied by United Carpets and Beds, but has been recently acquired by Wm Morrison Convenience Stores Ltd.

2.03 The site is located within Northenden 'Town Centre' (defined in the local development plan as a District Centre), where a mix of retail and non-retail service uses extend south from the site along both sides of Palatine Road.

2.04 To the east of the site are a number of existing light industrial units, accessed from Mill Lane.

2.05 To the north of the site is a modern three-storey residential block, known as Palatine Place, while to the west of the site are two-storey residential properties fronting onto Palatine Road. The wider surrounding area is largely residential, providing an extensive walk-in catchment for the proposed development.

2.06 There are bus stops with shelters located within close proximity to the site, with frequent services providing direct links to Altrincham, Didsbury, Sale, Stockport, Wythenshawe and Manchester City Centre.

Proposed Development

2.07 It is proposed to subdivide the retail unit to create:

- An 'M Local' convenience store trading from 445 sq. m of the unit, fronting onto Palatine Road; and
- A 'Halfords Autocentre' car servicing and MOT centre trading from the remaining 305 sq. m of the unit at the rear.

2.08 As set out in Section 3, the sub-division and use of the unit for the sale of convenience goods do not require planning permission, so the current application

seeks permission for a partial change of use from Class A1 retail to Class B2 car servicing and MOT centre, and for some minor external changes.

2.09 The M Local store will provide a high quality convenience store with a strong emphasis on fresh food and produce, helping to strengthen the retail offer of Northenden District Centre. The M Local will create 20 new jobs, of which 6 would be full time and 14 would be part time. The 'full-time equivalent' number of new jobs in the M Local would be 13.

2.10 The Halfords Autocentre will provide a facility for car servicing and repairs, including an MOT test centre. Work will be carried out inside the unit, which will also include a customer reception area, customer toilets, an office and staff room plus staff toilets. Vehicular access into the unit will be via the existing roller shutter door, while customer access will be via a new door, incorporated into a new shopfront. The Halfords Autocentre will create 5 new jobs. The opening hours of the Halfords Autocentre would be from 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday and from 10am to 4pm on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

2.11 The M Local store and Halfords Autocentre will share the existing car park, which provides 28 spaces.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.01 Planning permission (LPA Ref. 25183) was granted by Manchester City Council on 4 October 1985 for the erection of a single storey building to form retail unit with ancillary stockroom and car parking. A copy of the decision notice is attached at **Appendix 2.** Planning permission was granted subject to six conditions, none of which restrict the type of retail goods that can be sold from the unit or the hours during which the unit can operate or be serviced. The unit can therefore be used as a convenience store without the need for planning permission.

3.02 Since the original planning permission was granted in 1985, there have been a number of subsequent planning permissions relating to the installation of security roller shutters and signage for individual tenants. It is the intention of Wm Morrison Convenience Stores Ltd. to apply to the local planning authority separately for any new signage.

3.03 Prior to the site's development for retail use in 1985, the site was used as a car showroom, car servicing centre and petrol filling station.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.01 The purpose of this Section is to establish the planning policy framework against which the criteria of the application should be assessed.

4.02 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Conversely, applications, which are not in accordance with relevant policies in the Plan, should not be allowed unless material considerations justify a grant of planning permission.

4.03 The Statutory Development Plan comprises, the (soon to be abolished) North West Regional Spatial Strategy (September 2008), and the saved policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (July 1995). Further material policy considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), the emerging Manchester Core Strategy; and Circular 11/95: Use of Conditions in Planning Permission.

4.04 Each of these documents is reviewed as follows.

Statutory Development Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (September 2008)

4.05 This document is more strategic in nature and there are no policies of relevance to the determination of the current application.

Manchester Unitary Development Plan, July 2005

4.06 The majority of the policies in the Manchester UDP have been 'saved' by a Secretary of State Direction issued on 27 September 2007.

4.07 The UDP identifies Northenden as one of Manchester's District Centres and defines a boundary for the centre. The application site is within the boundary of the centre and is therefore an in-centre location. Policy S1.2 states that the Council in partnership with the private sector will encourage, where appropriate, the improvement and redevelopment of existing District Centres, in order to ensure that they remain the focus for both shopping and a full range of community facilities. The

policy also states that new development will be particularly welcome where it replaces obsolete shopping floorspace and is in keeping with the character of the existing centre. In addition, Policy EW14 (a) states that the Council will improve the external appearance of shopping areas in the District Centre of Northenden.

4.08 The UDP sets out an objective (I1) to retain existing jobs and maximise the opportunities for the generation of new employment consistent with the need to protect residential and environmental amenity. Policy I1.1 states that priority will be given to promoting development in District Centres consistent with them remaining the focus for shopping provision and community facilities.

Other Material Policy Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

4.09 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and sets out how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF replaces a large number of topic-based national planning policy guidance notes and planning policy statements.

4.10 Para. 14 of the NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, 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 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*
  - *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."*

4.11 Para. 19 states that 'significant weight' should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system, while Para. 23 states that planning policies should be positive and promote competitive town centre environments.

4.12 Para. 206 states that planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

Manchester Core Strategy, Publication Version, February 2011

4.13 The Manchester Core Strategy will replace the saved policies of the UDP, when it is adopted in 2012. It was considered at an Examination in Public in late 2011 and while not yet part of the statutory development plan, its policies do carry some weight in the determination of the current application.

4.14 Policy C1 sets out the city's retail hierarchy and confirms that Northenden is one of Manchester's 17 district centres, which are defined as having:

"An essential role in providing key services to the City's neighbourhoods including shopping, commercial, leisure, public and community functions, ensuring that residents can access such services easily."

4.15 Policy C2 sets out a policy for district centres, which states, inter alia:

"*Development will support thriving district centres, with distinct local character, providing a good range of accessible key services, including retail, health facilities, public services, leisure activities and financial and legal services. Housing will also be considered an appropriate use within district centres, providing it supports the vitality and viability of the centre.*"

4.16 The policy also states that:

"*Development in district centres should:*

- *Prioritise delivery of key 'visitor' services, including retail, public and commercial services and food and drink. The Council will also ensure that retail remains the principal use in Primary Shopping Areas, but also ensure that provision is made in district centres for commercial and service uses, leisure and community facilities and other uses which make a positive contribution to vitality and viability of centres. Subject to impact on overall character and local amenity, the Council will support development which extends the time during which district centres are active;*
- *Promote the development of employment which provides opportunities for local people;*
- *Promote the efficient use of land, particularly through considering options for multi-storey development. New development should positively contribute to the reuse and regeneration of land and premises, together with wider regeneration and investment strategies;*
- *Contribute positively to the diversity and mix of uses within centres without undermining their primary retail function. Development should also promote a range of retailers and shop formats;*
- *Promote choice and competition particularly where development will support the independent sector;*
- *Remedy deficiencies in areas with poor access to health facilities.*

New development should respect and enhance the character of existing centres.

New development should deliver improvements to the quality of the centre environment. Opportunities should be taken to adopt sustainable building design and practices to assist in adapting to climate change.

The Site Specific Allocations DPD will identify sites for new development within district centres."

4.17 Policy C7 states that additional food retail will be supported in Northenden, although this will be limited in scale and located within the boundaries of the existing centre. The policy also states that the LPA will maintain the character of the centre, in terms of its appearance and retail function.

4.18 The emerging Manchester Core Strategy defines Northenden as part of the 'Wythenshawe Regeneration Area', where Policy EC10 states, inter alia, that:

"The district centres of Wythenshaw, Northenden and the proposed new centre at Baguley will all be suitable for mixed use local employment provision serving their catchment area."

Circular 11/95: Use of Conditions in Planning Permission

4.19 This document outlines advice on the use of planning conditions and notes at paragraph 14 that there are 6 key tests, which must be adhered to when imposing a planning condition on a grant of planning permission. In order to be considered valid, conditions must be:

1) Necessary;
2) Relevant to planning;
3) Relevant to the development to be permitted;
4) Enforceable;
5) Precise; and
6) Reasonable in all other aspects

4.20 Paragraph 35 notes that, it would normally be reasonable to restrict the hours during which an industrial use may be carried on if the use of the premises outside these hours would affect the amenities of the neighbourhood, but it would be unreasonable to do so to such an extent as to make it impossible for the occupiers to run the business properly.

Summary

4.21 The review of the Development Plan and other material considerations shows that the application site is located within one of Manchester's District Centres, where the Council seeks to focus both shopping and a full range of community facilities. The Development Plan also recognises the potential of District Centres to create new employment.

4.22 The emerging Core Strategy identifies the potential for District Centres to provide a range of services, including commercial and services uses, and there is support for proposals that extend the times within which centres are active. Specifically in respect of Northenden, the emerging Core Strategy states that additional food retail development, at a modest scale, will be supported in the centre.

5. PLANNING ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.01 This Section considers the planning issues raised by the proposed partial change of use from retail to an MOT and car servicing centre, which requires planning permission. This Section also considers the impact of the M Local convenience store opening, which does not require planning permission.

5.02 The proposal will strengthen the role and function of Northenden District Centre in the following ways:

i) The introduction of a new M Local convenience store, improving retail choice and competition for the local population;
ii) Increasing the attraction of Northenden as a retail centre, with the potential for spin-off benefits for other businesses in the centre as a result of additional footfall;
iii) The introduction of a new Halfords Autocentre MOT and car servicing facility in a convenient town centre location, with the potential for customers to use the shops and services of the centre while waiting for their car to be serviced; and
iv) The creation of 25 new jobs, with the potential for employees to spend money in the other shops and services of the centre.

5.03 The proposal is therefore consistent with the policies of the adopted and emerging development plan, which seek to improve the vitality and viability of Northenden District Centre.

5.04 The proposal to operate an MOT and car servicing centre does not raise any significant amenity issues, as the work will be carried out indoors and the hours of operation of the Halfords Autocentre would be from 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday and from 10am to 4pm Sunday, which are outside any noise sensitive hours (defined in the now revoked PPG24 'Planning and Noise' as the hours when people are normally sleeping, i.e. between 11.00 pm and 7.00 am.)

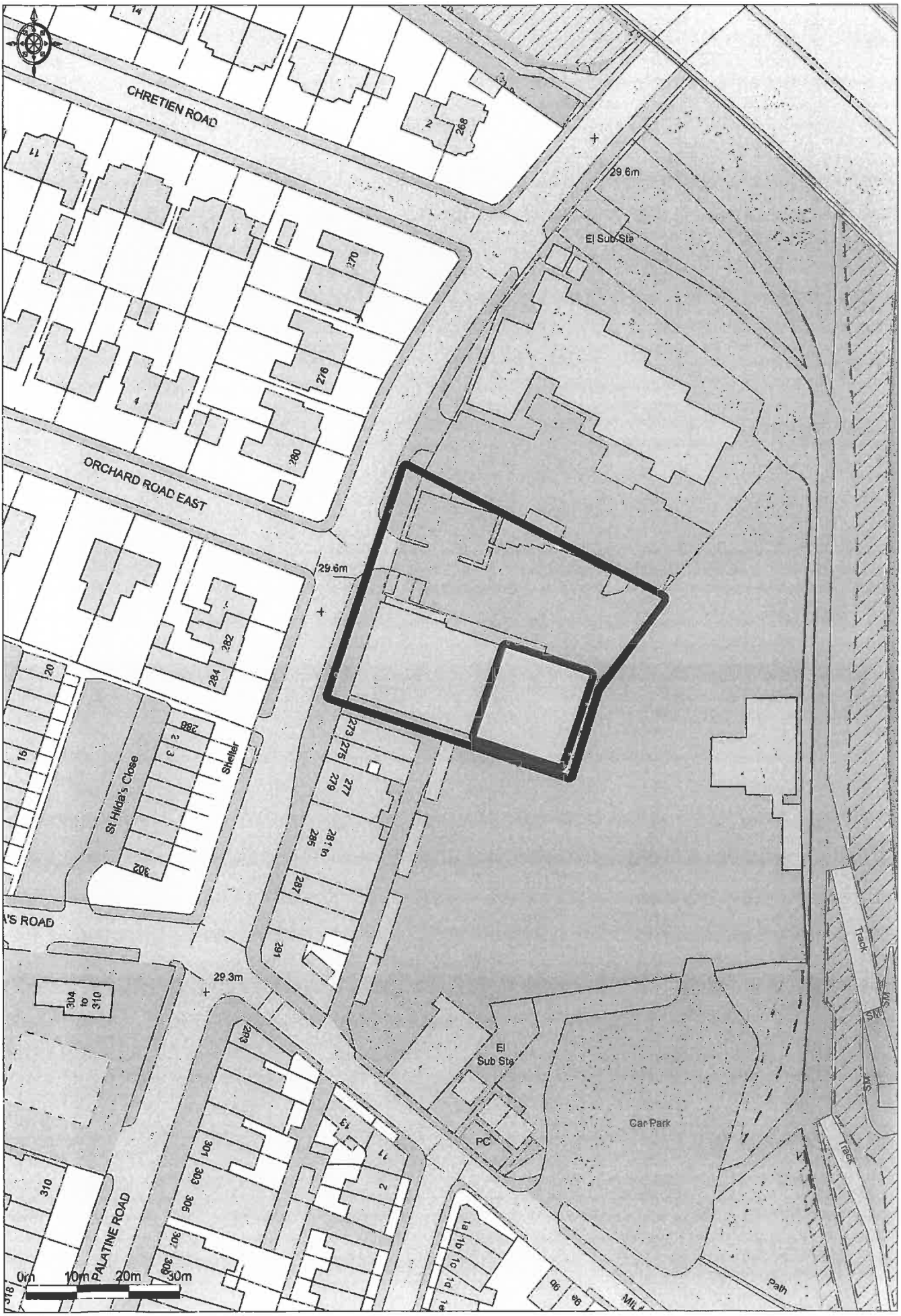
5.05 The NPPF states that developments which are in accordance with the development plan should be approved 'without delay' and that significant weight should be given to the economic development benefits of a proposal.

5.06 It is therefore concluded that there are no planning policy reasons for not approving the current planning application.

APPENDIX 1:

SITE LOCATION PLAN

Location Plan



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APPENDIX 2:

PLANNING PERMISSION REF. 25183

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Chief Executives Department (Regeneration Division)

Register of applications

Application Reference:
25183

Date Accepted:
6 September 1985

Applicant's Name and Address:

Jack Lunn & Co.Ltd.,
Progress House,, 99, Bradford Road,, Pudsey,, W.Yorks LS28 6AT,

Agent's Name and Address:

Webb.Seeger.Moorhouse
7, The Green,, Idle Village,, Bradford,, W.Yorks BD10 9PT,

Proposal:

Erection of a single storey building to form retail unit with ancillary stockroom and car parking

Location:

Site of, 267, Palatine Road, Northenden, NORTHENDEN,

Ward:

Decision:
Approved

Date of Decision:
4 October 1985

Conditions & Reasons

1) Conditions 1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of five years beginning with the date of this permission. 2. Samples of the materials to be used in the external elevations shall be submitted to and approved by the City Council before the development is commenced. 3. The landscaping scheme to form part of the development shall be implemented not later than 12 months from the date the building is first occupied; any trees or shrubs removed, dying or becoming severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 2 years of planting shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of a similar size and species to those originally required to be planted. 4. The car parking indicated on the approved plans shall be surfaced, demarcated and made available for use prior to the building hereby approved being occupied. 5. This planning permission relates to drawings numbered 1276/1/2 Rev. B. 6. The kerb radii at the access point should be a minimum of 7.5 metres. Reasons 1. Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 41 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971. 2. In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure a satisfactory development. 3. To secure the satisfactory development of the site and in the interests of visual amenity. 4. To ensure that there is adequate car parking for the development proposed when the building is occupied. 5. For the avoidance of doubt. 6. In

the interests of traffic and pedestrian safety to prevent servicing vehicles entering and leaving the site from either manoeuvring on Palatine Road or damaging the footpath by driving over it.