

MAT DESIGN LIMITED Planning & Building Control Consultancy 	Project: CHANGE OF USE FROM USE CLASS B2 (GENERAL INDUSTRIAL) TO CONVENIENCE STORE CLASS E (COMMERCIAL, BUSINESS AND SERVICE) AT 53 HOUGHTON STREET PRESCOT KNOWSLEY L34 5RS - SEQUENTIAL TEST	By: MCC	Date: 29/7/2025 Revision:
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LOCAL PLAN POLICY CS4 & SAVED UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY ASSESSMENT TO SUPPORT THE CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING APPLICATION 25/00041/FUL FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF FORMER SINGLE STOREY CAR REPAIR GARAGE (USE CLASS B2) FOR USE AS A CONVENIENCE STORE UNDER USE CLASS E.

SITE ADDRESS: 53 HOUGHTON STREET, PRESCOT. L34 5RS

APPLICANT: MR KANAGASUNTHARAM PARTHIPAN

PLANNING AGENT: MR MIKE CARR MSc MRTPI, DIRECTOR MAT DESIGN LIMITED

REPORT DATE: JULY 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

This Planning Policy Assessment has been prepared by Mr Mike Carr MSc MRTPI (MAT Design Limited) on behalf of Mr Kanagasuntharam Parthipan/ Houghton Minimart Limited, to support a planning application that proposes the change of use of the existing car repair (Use Class B2) floor space for use as a Use Class E (a) for the display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food. This Assessment should be considered in conjunction with the plans that have been prepared to support the assessment of the planning application.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND ITS SURROUNDS

The site subject of this planning application is a single storey building that has a commercial floor space of 131m2, which sits within a row of other commercial premises that front onto Houghton Street.

The premises that comprises of B2 floor space, which has provided Car Repair floor space that has been used intermittently over the past 16 years (source – Google Street Scene). Various other commercial premises are located along this part of Houghton Street, although it is noteworthy that the following premises are vacant, and have been for some considerable time:

- Pro-Clean at 61 Houghton Street
- A tyre repair/replacement business attached to the application site,
- The application site (also see Section 5 of this ST)

Houghton Street provides the main frontage to the west then onwards towards flatted residential accommodation, Bond Street is to the east, a Pet Grooming business is attached to the north, whilst the nearest occupied property to the south is at 65 Houghton Street, which starts a row of residential properties that extend to the junction of Kemble

Street. Overall, given the sites position within the Prescott, 53 Houghton Street can be described as located in a highly sustainable location.

3. PREMISES PLANNING AND TRADING HISTORY

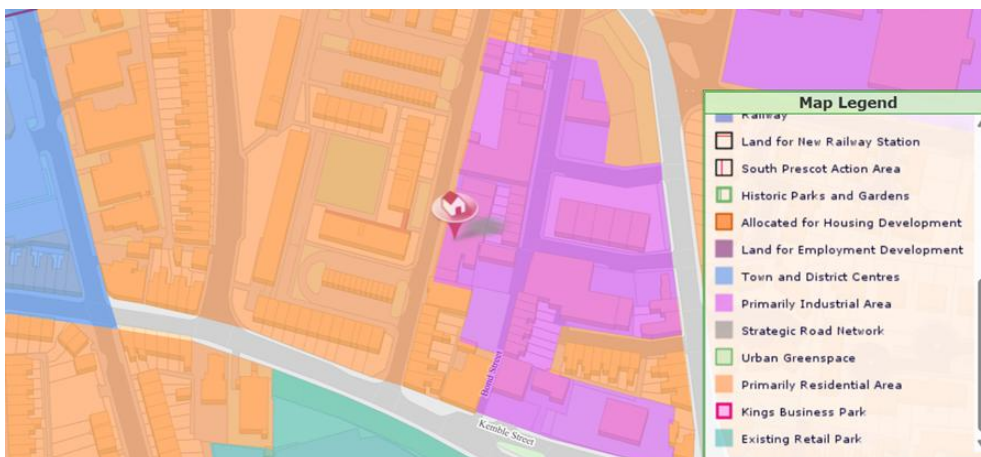
There are no planning applications on the Local Planning Authority planning register that affect the consideration of this planning application.

In terms of the sites trading history, taken from the available evidence via Google Street View, we would highlight to following:

- August 2024 – Premises trading as Earo Groups Limited - 1 employee,
- November 2022 – Site closed – No employees,
- October 2020 – Site closed – No employees,
- October 2018 – Site closed – No employees,
- May 2017 – Site closed – No employees,
- September 2016 – M & R Tyre Services – Employees unknown,
- April 2015 - Site closed – No employees,
- August 2009 – Site closed – No employees.

4. THE SITES LAND USE ALLOCATION

Image 1 below shows the application site marked and that its land use allocation as defined on the Local Plan Proposals Map is for Primarily Industrial Uses.



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Image 1 – The application site marked, to the eastern edge of the Primary Industrial Area and adjacent to the residential area to the west – Map Source – Knowsley Local Plan Proposals Map

5. LOCAL PLAN POLICY CS4 - ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT – RELEVANT POLICY AREAS

Overall Employment Development Strategy (1) is:

1) Planning, site assembly and other available interventions will be used to:

- a) Support sustainable economic growth and meet the development needs of established and emerging employment sectors, including the Liverpool City Region key economic sectors,
- b) Provide sufficient land to meet employment development needs to 2028,
- c) Enhance the quality and efficiency of land use within existing employment areas,
- d) Improve accessibility to an appropriate range of jobs, for example by encouraging mixed use employment/residential schemes where appropriate and improving transport linkages between housing and employment areas,
- e) Address skills and educational barriers to employment,
- f) Encourage recruitment targeted towards communities living in and around the development site,
- g) Support new start-up businesses including social enterprise,
- h) Encourage homeworking through improvements to digital communications and telecommunications infrastructure,
- i) Support the diversification of the rural economy; and
- j) Support the appropriate development of tourism facilities.

Safeguarding of Existing Employment Land (7)

Land which is currently in use or allocated for employment development will be safeguarded from changes to other types of development, except where: there is no current or likely future demand for employment uses on the land; or where other uses would bring wider regeneration, environmental and amenity benefits.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY CS4 ASSESSMENT

Having considered the trading history of the premises (overtime), its capacity to provide long terms and sustainable employment opportunities and its interface with Houghton Street and residential accommodation on the opposite side of Hought Street, we would make the following comments:

- The positive commercial re-use of 53 Houghton Street would provide a sustainable and long terms employment opportunity for 2 members of staff,
- The B2 industrial use of 53 Houghton Street has been non-existent since 2009, with only 2 periods of employment use being recorded since 2009 (see section 3 above),
- The last period of employment use for the B2 industrial use of 53 Houghton Street was in August 2024. There was 1 employee attached to the use of the site for car repairs,
- The sustainable employment opportunities would represent a wider regeneration benefit,
- The Local Planning Authority do not have a floorspace/employee ratio. Taking this into account, we consider that the proposed development is likely to provide more employment opportunity
- The outlook of the premises towards Houghton Street is poor and has an adverse impact on the wider street scene,
- When the premises have been used intermittently for B2 industrial purposes, the minimal separation and open fronted nature of the premises onto Haughton Street, had a harmful impact on the environmental and amenity and,
- When considered in conjunction with UDP Policy EC3, the formation of this small retail unit would help to enhance the quality and efficiency of land use within existing employment areas by providing a range of convenience goods to employees with the Industrial Estate.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY EC3: PRIMARILY INDUSTRIAL AREAS

1. Primarily industrial areas are identified on the Proposals Map and are appropriate locations for Business (Class B1); General Industry (Class B2); and Storage and Distribution (Class B8) uses.

2. Proposals for development for other uses in these areas (either on sites which are allocated for development or on other land or buildings) will only be permitted where they would:

- a) Be complementary to and compatible with the surrounding employment uses,
- b) Be consistent with any approved regeneration strategy for the area

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c) Preserve or enhance the image of the industrial area and,

d) Avoid causing an unacceptable loss of land available for industrial development.

UDP Paragraph 6.26 provides an explanation attached to how UDP Policy EC3 can work to support sustainable development in the Knowsley Borough. Within this context, paragraph 6.26 sets out that:

- In some cases, for example, small shops or petrol stations are needed within industrial areas to provide a local service to occupiers of the area. Other uses which can sometimes be most appropriately carried out in industrial areas include builders' merchants, tyre and exhaust centres, waste transfer stations, etc....

However, such uses must be well sited and designed to avoid causing harm to the environment and image of industrial areas, the processes carried out by neighbouring industrial occupiers or neighbouring non-industrial uses. Such uses are generally not appropriate for high quality B1 business parks due to the impact of noise, fumes, dust and so on but may be acceptable in industrial areas allocated for B2 or B8 uses.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY EC3 ASSESSMENT

Having considered the provisions of Policy EC3, we consider that the proposed retail use would be of such a size and scale that it would be complementary to and compatible with the surrounding employment uses and would (due to its minimal scale) not cause an unacceptable loss of land available for industrial development.

When this is considered further and within the context of paragraph 6.26, it is quite clear that a positive application of this policy seeks to allow small shops that are needed within industrial areas to provide a local service to occupiers of the area. This is the case here and we consider that the proposed retail unit would provide regeneration benefits to the wider land use allocation without causing demonstrable harm to its employment opportunity capabilities.

When one further recognises that this site has had a negligible employment record, the formation of 2 job opportunities adds further weight in support of the proposed use.

6. POLICY ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

When the above-mentioned material planning considerations are placed into the planning balance, which includes the long-term vacancy/use of 53 Houghton Street, we consider that the formation of this small local shop within the industrial estate would have positive regeneration benefits that would comply with the provisions of Saved UDP Policy EC3. Furthermore, we also consider that the loss of the B2 lawful use of the premises, its negative relationship with the street scene and local residential amenity, would enhance the quality and efficiency of land use within

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existing employment area by association, whilst providing environmental and residential amenity benefits to Houghton Street and residents.

Taking these material planning considerations into account, we consider that the proposed development represents a sustainable form of development as Set out in NPPF paragraph 8, and the development would also comply with the policy thrust provisions of Local Plan Policy CS4 and Saved UDP Policy EC3.