

Conservation & Design Team

Economy and Place

Urban Design Consultation Response

Application ref: 25/00621/FUL

Proposal:

Erection of 74-bed care home development, including creation of new access, car parking, landscaping and other associated works following demolition of Sparth House.

Site Address: Sparth House, 185 Manchester Road, Rochdale OL11 3QY

Date of Response: 06.11.25

Consultation Report:

Significant concern is raised regarding the scale, massing and footprint of the proposed building.

The site is currently occupied by a large single dwelling constructed in the inter-war period between 1915-1944, but which sits modestly in a setback position within the street scene of Manchester Road and includes extensive grounds to the rear.

The existing property currently contributes well to the street scene of Manchester Road and sits attractively in its row, which takes an oblique angle off Manchester Road

The development as proposed would result in the demolition of the existing building and the subsequent construction of a significantly larger building, both in terms of its massing on Manchester Road and its footprint into the existing rear garden area.

Of notable concern is the visual appearance of the building in relation to the lower rise properties either side of the plot, along with the impact on existing surrounding properties in respect of loss of outlook, overshadowing of private amenity space and overbearing impact.

The overall design detailing ethos of the building would not necessarily be unacceptable in terms of visual appearance, although at the scale proposed it would benefit from a larger plot with greater separation between existing buildings. However, the setback section as viewed from the front appears to split the building into two halves as a recessive feature with an incongruent roof form. A further recessed gable fronted roof formation may have worked better in this location, along with slightly wider windows.

Projecting pattern brickwork is a common design trend, but getting the brick type right is essential to make this type of design feature work. Textured soft bricks are likely to crack over time due to freeze-thaw erosion of the upper surface, which can be expensive to address.

Concern is raised over the amount of outdoor space to be provided for residents and visiting family members & guests, plus indeed staff to enjoy their break times. Dementia care requires a range of safe spaces and environments, including areas where families and guests can congregate privately. The large footprint of the building results a very small amount of usable outdoor amenity space for the proposed 74 residents together with their carers, families and guests. This is particular notable given that local amenities are few and far between at a distance that more mobile residents could easily and safely access.

The location and nature of the proposed development is such that residents would likely rely on their visitors or carers with a private motor vehicle to access local shops and services to meet everyday needs. This results in notable concern that the quantum of parking provision on site is highly likely to be insufficient to serve the development. Once resident numbers (without cars) and on-site staff, visiting health professionals, families, ambulances, delivery vans etc are factored in, it's likely that the proposed level of parking provision would be inadequate. It is also noted that there are very limited close by opportunities for overspill on-street parking

It is further noted that the application proposal would rely on the removal of trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order. It would be expected that the design response for any proposed redevelopment of the site would seek to preserve these trees to ensure their longevity as they play a crucial role in mitigating the climate crisis and restricting urban heating, along with providing ecosystem and biodiversity benefits.

Therefore, taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposed quantum of development would be excessive for the plot

Consultation Summary:

The proposed quantum of development would appear to be excessive for the plot given the unacceptable neighbour amenity impacts of loss of outlook, overlooking and overbearing impact, together with the loss of protected trees, insufficient outdoor amenity space for the residents, visitors & staff and likely inadequate amount of parking provision reasonably required for a development of this size and typology.