

URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Design Officer	Azhar Kapadi
Date	10.10.25
Application Reference	25/00510/FUL
Address	Ginnell Farm, Broad Lane, Rochdale, OL16 4PU
Proposal	Demolition of existing buildings and the erection of 9 no. dwellings, including associated landscaping and access

Introduction

The [National Design Guide](#) sets out the ten characteristics of a well-designed place. Well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical **Character**. The ten characteristics help to nurture and sustain a sense of **Community**. They work to positively address environmental issues affecting **Climate**. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#).

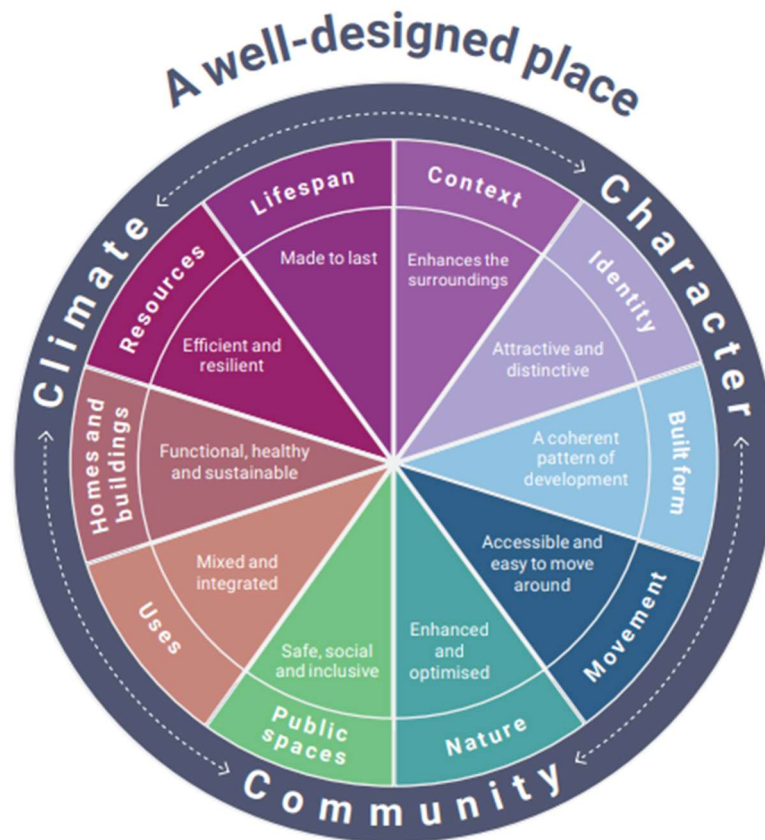


Figure: The ten characteristics of a well-designed place

Source: National Design Guide, 2021

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Reason(s) for Consultation

Building / Urban design

Scheme Image(s)



Assessment

This assessment has been made against:

National Guidance:

- The National Planning Policy Framework
- The ten characteristics of a well-designed place contained within the National Design Guide
- National Model Design Code
- Building for a Healthy Life design toolkit

Local Policy:

Rochdale Core Strategy policies:

- S03 – To improve design, image and quality of place
- P1 – Improving Image
- P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- P3 – Improving design of new development
- DMI (General Development Requirements)

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Oldham and Rochdale Urban Design Guide
Oldham and Rochdale Residential Design Guide

The Unitary Development Plan:

- G/BE/1 - Design Quality
- BE/2 - Design Criteria for New Development

Greater Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide

Emerging Planning Policy - Places for Everyone (PfE) joint development plan

SUMMARY

The layout requires targeted amendments to improve street frontage and reduce vehicle dominance. I am not satisfied with the elevational materiality, detailing and overall material intent. Key information remains outstanding to support the application, and in its current form, the proposals would not meet design policy. These shortcomings can, however, be addressed within this application through revised drawings, clarified specifications and appropriate conditions. A design workshop with the architect/agent may be beneficial.

PreApp

PREAPP/00015/24 – The proposal submitted at Pre-App was considered to be acceptable in principle, and subject to further detailed design work. It was noted by the officer at this stage, 'the submitted documents provide limited information on the proposals in terms of design but do indicate a general layout, heights of buildings, and general form.' The applicant was also advised to 'undertake a site context appraisal and consider which elements of the local character make the most positive contributions and avoid repeating local features which have detracted from the area.'

Scale

The scale and size of the properties are deemed suitable and are an appropriate addition to the urban context.

Context

Different house types are welcomed to avoid monotony but I would contest the design approach put forward in Clause 5.53 in the design access statement:

5.53 Different house types are proposed to add visual interest, but the buildings will clearly read as part of the same development, and will not appear substantially different to the dwellings to the west of the site so as to sympathetically integrate with this development. The form of each building will also not be overly-complicated and will be broadly in-keeping with the form of the existing residential buildings in the immediate vicinity

The proposed development can remain contextual without having to repeat some of the poor design choices of nearby developments.

Revisions in the NPPF cemented the role of beauty in placemaking and the planning system, with Chapter 12 now seeking to achieve well-designed and beautiful places (author emphasis). In support of this, the Government has produced a suite of guidance documents including Building for a Healthy Life (BHL), the National Model Design Code (NMDC) and the National Design Guide (NDG) which form a material consideration in the assessment of the design of development proposals, and aid Local Authorities and developers alike in understanding if development proposals are well-designed. Furthermore, the Local Authority now has the benefit of drawing upon Urban Design guidance which was not available when these nearby developments were approved.

The housing scheme immediately east of this site, constructed over a decade ago, exemplifies the shortcomings of formulaic volume housebuilding—characterised by generic housetypes, poor contextual integration, and limited architectural interest. This precedent should not be repeated. Further useful reference can be found in the BHL toolkit.

The visual interest of elevations are lacking. Without sufficient information or evidence regarding the materials and details, the proposal would fail to meet Core Strategy Policies DM1, P1, P2, and P3 due to its weak elevational design and lack of material richness. Some of the house types do not promote innovation or originality (P1), does not enhance local character or distinctiveness (P2), and misses the opportunity to improve townscape quality through high-quality detailing or landscaping (DM1, P3).

Site Layout

The proposed strategy to screen unsightly boundary treatments with trees and native landscaping is supported and should be implemented across the site. Specify locally appropriate species and planting densities capable of effectively screening fencing within a reasonable establishment period, and secure long-term management through a landscape management plan.

The two visitor parking spaces in the location shown must be reassessed; their current position produces a weak outlook and poor street frontage for residents and constitutes poor urban design. Reconfigure the plot layouts to allow a turning head within the access road, which remains feasible and would materially improve circulation and street character.

The gap between Plot 7 and Plot 8 is excessive, car dominated and overly tarmacked. Redesign this gap to reduce vehicle dominance, introduce softer surfacing and planting, and remove opportunities for tandem parking that could obstruct the turning head.

Provide a coherent street elevation for Plots 4–9 that includes the highway alignment and the adjacent development. This elevation should demonstrate how the proposed frontage treatment and building lines read in context and confirm the effectiveness of the proposed screening.

Where trees are located within private curtilages they can improve frontage but present long-term management risks. Require a management and maintenance strategy secured by condition that sets out

responsibility, maintenance standards and replacement provisions. Consider using planning controls to restrict permitted development rights where necessary to safeguard planting and frontage treatments.

Further landscaping detail is required for the parcel of land beside the existing footpath running north to south. Something more interesting can be done to improve this.

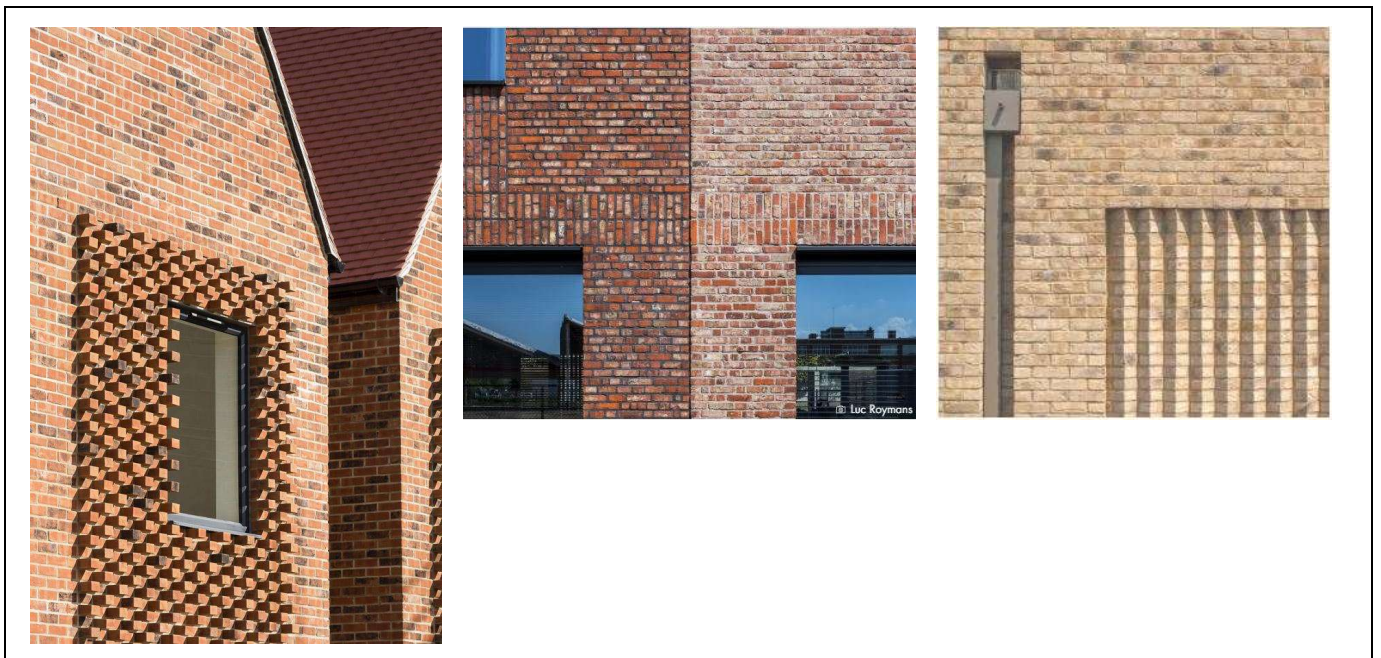
Materials

Materials are too vague – whilst this can be finalised with conditions, it is disappointing to see no design intent for the brickwork proposed. Brickwork like the neighbouring development would not be deemed acceptable so I would suggest looking at bricks that offer some texture and visual interest through the blend mix.

Roof and eaves details are unclear and appear under-drawn. Provide a full specification for roof coverings and cross-sections at eaves and verges to confirm proposed profiles; avoid deep, visually dominant fascia boards and oversized soffits.

I would recommend against dark framed UPVC like black and anthracite. It has been overly done throughout the borough and most often it simply highlights the thickness and bulkiness of the upvc frames. This becomes more problematic especially if the glazing /masonry ratio is weak. Change the colour for something softer otherwise offer up a slimmer aluminium frame.

Overall, the elevations would benefit from greater architectural refinement. Introduce measured recesses and projections, and consider natural stone window and door surrounds or similar high-quality detailing to enrich the brick elevations and improve the scheme's visual quality. Draw upon architectural precedents opposed to the neighbouring development for some architectural inspiration.



Housetypes

Plot 1

Plot 1 has strong spatial potential but needs refined elevation work. Avoid spandrel panels and use larger uninterrupted windows with toughened lower panes for privacy. Add brick detailing at low level and around

openings (horizontal banding, projecting courses or stepped work). Recess or strengthen the porch and add modest brick detailing above to break the blank mass.

Plot 2 -3

This plot addresses some of the blank elevation areas more successfully. Any brick detailing should be done in the same facing brickwork and not a lower visual substitute. Any applicable comments to Plot 1 also apply to these. Entrance areas are really letting down the dwellings.

Plot 4

More visual interest is required to the side elevations facing the highway. The neighbouring development is somewhat successful in identifying double frontage corner plots; this plot would benefit from a double fronted elevation.

Plot 6-9

As per other plot comments. Ground floor windows would benefit with some relief / detail below window. It would be more effective if the living rooms were brought to the front to allow larger glazing on these front elevations. Actual glazing across the elevations is quite limited and I'm not sure if the small windows to the bedrooms are working either.

Too many different types of windows, particularly if they appear to have no apparent relationship to one another, can result in a disordered façade. Had the architect provided the street elevation this stark contrast would be apparent.

Drawing Information Required

- More information on materials
- Clarity on details, architectural features
- Street elevation(s)
- Proposed site layout is cut off on the titlesheet – this needs to be fully visible