



CHORLTON PLANNING LTD

Town Planning & Development Consultants

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR DETACHED DWELLING

LAND OFF WILDHOUSE LANE, MILNROW, ROCHDALE, OL16 3UU

PLANNING STATEMENT
GREEN BELT POLICY

Supplementary to Planning Statement dated 2021

Prepared by Chorlton Planning Ltd

on behalf of Mr and Mrs M Morris

A2342

Chorlton Planning Ltd

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1.0 PREAMBLE

1.1 In June 2021 Chorlton Planning Limited prepared a Planning Statement to support the above application.

1.2 Since the Statement was written planning policy and advice has changed, in particular with the updating of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adoption of the Places for Everyone (PFE) document. The following updated Statement takes these into account.

1.3 This Statement concentrates on Green Belt Policy and in particular the very special circumstances that are required to outweigh the normal presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 The application site is off Wildhouse Court which is to the west of Wildhouse Lane which links Milnrow with Hollingworth Lake and Littleborough. To the south is Hylands, a detached house, beyond which is Croft Head Farm, Crofthead Close and the built up part of Milnrow Village. To the north is a small terrace of houses, Nos. 1 to 3 Wildhouse Court, beyond which is a large, detached house, Wild House, and The Bellavista, a large restaurant and wedding/event centre. To the west and east is open countryside. There is a well-established bank of trees to the west of the site and a smaller group of trees within the north-eastern part of the site.

2.2 The site has a gentle downward slope from east to west and is below the level of Wildhouse Lane. The site is open and rather unkempt at present. Two small garages fronting directly onto Wildhouse Court are located to the north east of the site. These are outside the application site and are to remain.

2.3 Access is from Wildhouse Court which itself is accessed from Wildhouse Lane. The access to Wildhouse Lane has good visibility being on the inside of a gentle bend.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal is for a single dwelling house. The form, massing and design of the dwelling is reflective of the local vernacular with inspiration being taken from historic houses/farmhouse groupings and the undulation of the Pennine landscape and influenced by the landscape contemporary artist, Anthony Gouldsworthy.

3.2 Full details of the design concept, the proposed building and landscaping are provided within the architect's plans and Design and Access Statement.

3.3 The proposed house will be positioned close to Wildhouse Court in the eastern part of the plot. The western part will be attractively landscaped with a wildlife pond that will also facilitate sustainable drainage and encourage biodiversity.

3.4 The ground floor will accommodate a kitchen/living area, utility room and two bedrooms. On the upper floor is a lounge, to take advantage of the views, a study, en-suite master bedroom together with circulation areas. The main entrance is set centrally and leads into an imposing double height area that gives access to both sides with a feature open staircase leading to the upper floor.

3.5 Interest in the design and functionality of the building is created by the walls being at offset angles creating a loose zig zag effect.

3.6 The palette of materials is simple – primarily tiles to the roof and locally sourced Pennine stone with complementary render to the walls, as suggested by the conservation officer.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 Planning applications within the borough of Rochdale are assessed against National, sub regional and local planning and environmental policies. The principal policy documents are:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is the principal planning policy document. All other planning policy documents need to be in conformity with this Framework and it takes precedence over local policies contained within out of date local plans. The NPPF was updated in December 2023 by the previous Government. The new Government intends to update and revise the NPPF. A 2024 Draft NPPF has been issued for consultation purposes.
- The Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Plan (PFE), which covers nine participating local authorities in Greater Manchester, including Rochdale, This was adopted on 21st March 2024
- The Rochdale UDP Core Strategy which was adopted in October 2016 is still being used until the Rochdale Allocations Plan is prepared and adopted.

4.2 It is likely that the Revised 2024 NPPF, once it is issued, will in turn require changes to the planning policy documents listed above.

4.3 Advice contained within the Council's 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is also relevant.

4.4 The site is within the Green Belt as designated on the Rochdale UDP Proposals Map. A number of Rochdale Core Strategy policies are relevant and were referred to in the earlier Planning Statement.

5.0 GREEN BELT POLICY

5.1 With regard to the Green Belt issue, the 2021 Planning Statement argued that the development complies with then NPPF Paragraph 145 (now par 154) as it was limited infill development in a village.

5.2 Whilst we still hold this view we have been asked to concentrate on the very special circumstances that are required to justify development within the Green Belt. These are addressed as follows.

5.3 Advice on development on Green Belt land is provided in Chapter 13 of the NPPF.

5.4 The 5 main purposes of including land within the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 134 of the NPPF, are:

- *To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.*
- *Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.*
- *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.*
- *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

Encroachment

5.5 With regard to the third criteria, the proposed development does not encroach into the countryside.

5.6 The dictionary definition of encroachment is:

“a gradual advance beyond usual or acceptable limits”.

5.7 In planning terms encroachment is usually linear in character.

5.8 There is built development on either side of the application site in particular the development to the north which contains numbers 1 to 3 Wildhouse Court, Wild House itself and the substantial building mass of the Bellavista Restaurant and Event Centre. The proposed development does not advance beyond this existing built up area.

5.9 Consequently, it is argued that the proposed development is not in conflict with the 5 purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

Limited Infill in a Village

5.10 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF lists a number of exceptions to normal Green Belt policy. This includes criterion e – limited infilling in villages.

5.11 As described above there is substantial built development to the north and south of the application site and the proposed building will fill the gap between Hylands and Number 1 Wildhouse Court.

5.12 In visual terms there is a clear gap between existing linear built development along a highway.

5.13 With regard the definition of a village, this is not defined in the NPPF.

5.14 Wikipedia defines a village as:

“a clustered human settlement or community, larger than a hamlet but smaller than a town (although the word is often used to describe both hamlets and smaller towns), where the population typically ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand. Although villages are often located in rural areas, the term urban village is also applied to certain urban neighbourhoods...”

5.15 Milnrow historically has always been referred to as the village, while Rochdale is referred to as the town. Newhey is and always was regarded as a separate village with its own shops, parish church, railway station, etc.

5.16 Having been born and lived in Milnrow for my first 25 years I can confirm that my family and I have always referred to Milnrow as being a village, and my view is that most residents of Milnrow will also refer it to a village, not a town. Whilst I appreciate that this is subjective, given that there is no clear definition of what constitutes a village then surely the popular local view must prevail. I would also refer to various businesses within Milnrow which have their title as village, including the Village Medical Practice.

5.17 It is argued then that the proposed development does comply with criterion e of NPPF Paragraph 145 in that it is limited infilling in a village.

5.18 It is noted that the Core Strategy Proposals Map, saved from the former UDP, shows what is in effect a village envelope around Milnrow and Newhey villages. This, in itself, does not define whether a property is within the village. The issue was examined by The Court of Appeal in the case of Julian Wood vs SSCLG and Gravesham Borough Council (2015)

5.19 Extract from Court papers stated that:

“before this Court it was common ground that whether or not a proposed development constituted limited infilling in the village for the purposes of Paragraph 89 (of the then NPPF) was a question of planning judgement for the Inspector and the Inspectors answer so that question would depend upon his assessment of the position on the ground. It was also common ground that while a village boundary as defined in a local plan would be relevant consideration, it would not necessarily be determinative, particularly in circumstances where the boundary as defined did not accord with the Inspector’s assessment of the extent of the village and the ground.....”

5.20 Hylands, Wildhouse Court and indeed the Bellavista Restaurant are close to the built up area of Milnrow Village and would be regarded by villagers as an integral part of the village. The facilities within the village and the village centre are within easy walking distance of these properties and there is no obvious reason to regard them as not being part of the village.

5.21 Given the above it is argued that the proposed development is infill development within a village and that it is in compliance with NPPF Paragraph 145 (now para.154)

Very Special Circumstances

5.22 Should this view not be accepted, or to add weight to the justification for the development, then Paragraphs 152 and 153 of the revised NPPF need to be considered. These state that:

“inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

Outstanding Design

5.23 The justification for the proposed development is based mainly on its unique and outstanding design but other issues are also relevant.

5.24 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that;

“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply.

e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

- is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

- would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.”

5.25 Paragraph 139 states:

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

(a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes; and/or

(b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

5.26 The proposed dwelling is of truly outstanding design which reflects a high standard of architecture. The use of innovative materials and design techniques will create a unique building which will enhance the local environment.

5.27 The architect's design brief was:

To design a house which is outstanding architecturally, low energy, responds to the site context, makes the most of the views to the west, to be responsive to the existing ecology of the area and encourage natural wildlife habitats.

5.26 The architects Design and Access Statement states:

The cottages at the entrance to Wildhouse Court are at an angle to the road, which gives them a visually interesting dynamic and integrates the building mass within the wider landscape.

The building is broken down into 2 forms which take account of the changes in levels and form an entrance enclosure. They are positioned, so that the living space, garden room and master bedroom have open views to the north west. Together they create a dynamic sinuous form which enables the building to become a part of a wider landscape.

5.27 The proposed building form is reflective of the local vernacular with an orientation which would infill a gap between the two adjacent properties to the north and south of the site.

5.28 Inspiration for the detailed form and massing is taken from the historic houses/farmhouse groupings and the undulation of the Pennine landscape, influenced by the contemporary landscape artist, Anthony Gouldsworthy.

5.29 The new building will be in a landscape setting which supports and complements its form. The garden area will be landscaped to encourage the growth of native species and create an enhanced wildlife zone that will be part of the surrounding wildlife habitat. The more immediate domestic areas around the house will be planted with native species that will link into the existing landscape on either side. A full landscaping scheme can be provided in response to a planning condition.

5.30 The architect has deliberately used a simplistic approach to the design which fits well within the urban/rural landscape in terms of its massing and materials but also is innovative in its plan shape which produces a zig zag, which is reflective of organic growth of buildings in the Pennines.

5.31 The building is of high quality and innovative design which promotes high level of sustainability in its construction and future maintenance.

5.32 The building will be similar in scale to surrounding buildings, and as infill development it will follow the same line, form and rhythm of the existing development along Wildhouse Court. It will sit below the level of Wildhouse Lane making it recessive to passing pedestrians and motorists.

Higher value houses

5.33 Places for Everyone (PFE) seeks to encourage the competitiveness of the northern areas of Greater Manchester by attracting higher income households which in turn will require higher quality individual houses.

5.34 PFE Paragraph 4.49 states;

It will be important to increase the attractiveness of the northern areas to a wider range of people. In particular, there is the potential to increase the number of higher income households who choose to live in the north. The influx of more entrepreneurs and skilled workers could help to increase business creation and support local economic activity, as well as reducing pressures in the southern areas which currently have high levels of demand. This Plan allocates a small number of sites in the northern areas specifically to increase attractiveness of the northern areas to highly paid, highly skilled workers, including at such sites as Chew Brook Vale (Robert Fletchers) in Oldham (Policy JP Allocation 13 'Chew Brook Vale (Robert Fletchers)'), Bamford/Norden in Rochdale (Policy JP Allocation 17 'Bamford / Norden') and East of Boothstown in Salford (Policy JP Allocation 25 'East of Boothstown') although many other sites have the potential to attract skilled workers and hence boost the competitiveness of the north

5.35 PFE Policy JP-Strat6: Northern Areas

A significant increase in the competitiveness of the northern areas will be sought. There will be a strong focus on making as much use as possible of suitable previously-developed (brownfield) land through urban regeneration, enhancing the role of the town centres and diversifying the residential offer. Thiswill help to boost economic opportunities and diversify housing provision.

.....The construction of new housing is also an important part of the economy, providing large numbers of jobs and often securing the redevelopment of derelict and underused sites

5.36 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

7.28 A key aim of this Plan is to boost the supply of well designed, adaptable new homes with appropriate access to private space. In some areas this will help to diversify local housing markets that are often dominated by low-cost housing, bring more money into local economies, and deliver more mixed and inclusive communities. It will also help to increase the options for skilled workers looking to move into or within our area. Focusing a significant proportion of housing growth in the northern areas will assist

in this, supported by selectively releasing Green Belt sites to deliver a diverse mix of values and tenures that includes affordable homes as well as some higher value housing, (relative to prevailing values in the local area), within a high quality environment. This will help to achieve a better spread of higher value housing and prosperity across the plan area, whilst also delivering greater diversity within individual areas

Self build and custom build housing

5.37 The need to boost the self and custom build sector in Greater Manchester, including Rochdale, is referred to in the PFE.

PFE Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing Development across the plan area should seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes including for self-build and community led building projects to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods.....

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5.38 The Government has published a paper entitled ‘Self and Custom Build Action Plan’. It was published on the 24th of April 2021.

5.39 The paper draws attention to the need to boost self and custom build homes. It states;

“the housing market is dominated by a small number of volume builders and to reach the ambition of delivering 300,000 additional homes per year we must maximise delivery across new and existing sub-sectors, catalysing new tenures and giving consumers greater choice over housing products.

Self and custom build housing harnesses the power and initiative of individuals to instigate building projects giving them control over the look and feel of their home. Often utilising small sites of little interest to major builders, the sector brings forward housing projects delivered through SME’s and specialist builders, helping to build a more diverse and resilient house building sector, and improving the design and quality of homes as they are built by the people who will live in them.

The self and custom build sector is underdeveloped in the UK. In Europe and North America, the sector delivers a much higher proportion of housing output. Only 7% of homes in the UK are built via self and custom build, delivering an estimated 13,000 units in 2018. Nonetheless, even at this underdeveloped scale, this level of output is enough to make the sector the equivalent of UK’s fourth largest house builder. There is capacity to expand and if we increase to levels similar to the Netherlands, we could see 30 to 40,000 self and custom build homes built annually.

The Government is committed to increasing the number of self and custom build homes in this country and to establish it as a mainstream option for people to choose to get on the housing ladder or when moving home. The Government has previously brought forward initiatives to tackle the barrier to the growth of the sector, and now we are bringing these initiatives and new ones together under one, self and custom build action plan”.

5.40 Under existing legislation Councils are required to keep a register of demand for self and custom build in their area to meet the demand within a 3 year period.

5.41 The Government is keen to scale up the self-build market. The paper states:

“beyond the policy interventions noted above, the Government recognises the opportunity to do more to scale up the delivery of new homes through the self and custom build sector. Coronavirus has highlighted the importance of our home and that homes should maximise our creativity, our effectiveness and the quality of our lives. The Prime Minister has therefore commissioned Richard Bacon MP to undertake a review to establish a plan to scale up self and custom build homes to boost capacity and overall housing supply and provide recommendations to the Government”.

5.42 It is clear from the above that the self and custom build sector is underperforming, but yet there is keen interest from individuals, and groups, to follow custom or self-build opportunities. There is clearly a demand for this type of development in the Rochdale area, but there does not appear to be enough sites available to meet this demand.

5.43 The proposed dwelling covers all the points listed in the Government Paper.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The very special circumstances listed below are considered to outweigh the normal presumption against new development in the Green Belt,

6.2 The design is innovative and reflects the highest standard of architecture and will help to raise standards of design more generally in the area. It meets NPPF exception criteria referred to above.

6.3 The proposal will create a unique high quality aspirational dwellinghouse that will help to promote Rochdale’s image as a place that encourages innovation in design.

6.4 It will be an example of a quality bespoke designed higher value house that will assist in improving the competitiveness of the northern areas of Greater Manchester.

6.5 The house will be of unique design to suit the applicant’s lifestyle – effectively a ‘self-design and built house’. This will increase the number of self – build houses in the borough which is in line with Government and PFE policy,

6.6 The house will enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the semi rural area in which it is situated.

6.7 The construction of a dwelling such as that proposed represents a significant opportunity to create one which is as near carbon neutral as is possible. It will provide an excellent example of sustainable architecture.

6.8 The landscaping is an integral part of the overall design and will introduce tree planting and water features that will enhance the biodiversity habitat and encourage wildlife in the area generally.

6.9 The proposals meet the principles of good town planning and comply with national and local planning policies.

Chorlton Planning Ltd
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