

URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Design Officer	Azhar Kapadi / Mike Atkinson Smith
Date	18.12.24 (MAS) 23.05.25 Set 2 Comments
Application Reference	24/01120/FUL
Address	Lancashire Dog Training And Behaviour Centre , Bamford Road, Heywood, Rochdale, OL10 4TF
Proposal	Demolition of existing building and erection of three storey building comprising 6no. two bed apartments with associated car parking, boundary treatments, bin store and landscaping

Scheme Image



SUMMARY

The design is seen as visually poor, lacking architectural interest. The design will not function well and to the overall quality of the area, with design longevity as a concern. This risks emboldening future poor development across the borough.

Design changes are required.

Background

An earlier consultation was provided by Urban Design on 18.12.24. This was earlier in the design process and summarised below:

The primary design concerns for the proposed development revolve around its overdevelopment of the plot, which is considered too large given site constraints. Key issues include the breach of the building line, the detrimental impact on long-range views of the St Luke's Church spire, and the prominent, problematic side elevation along Bamford Road. Further design flaws include the stark visual juxtaposition with the adjacent bungalow, concerns about the outlook and light for neighbours, and an unsuitable rear parking arrangement directly in front of ground-floor bedrooms. The design also needs improvement on front gable features, entrance prominence, mail delivery strategy, and extensive unbroken brickwork, along with the lack of windows for bathroom ventilation and appropriately served bedrooms.

Since I was not involved in the scheme's earlier development, I have purposely not made comments on siting and massing; my feedback is based solely on the latest design of the building.



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION

Design

Whilst we do not expect an award winning design here in this location we would still expect to see an approach to good quality design. The elevations in general are poorly executed creating a poor visual outlook along the street.

The revisions to the NPPF in July 2021 establish very clearly that development which is not well designed should be refused.

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping

The design is seen as visually poor and inconsistent with its surroundings. The building is characterised by poorly executed materials, unattractive facades and overall, the design feels disjointed.

Update Drawing Information

The previous design certainly required some improvement but I am not convinced the latest iteration has actually improved, creating a roof form that is out of place with the context, and giving rise to more flat elevations. Assuming the previous layout functioned appropriately could there be scope to employ the design guidance from this consultation to the earlier design?

Entrance

As mentioned in the earlier consultation, the front entrance is particularly weak and unwelcoming, creating a poor frontage along the main road. The designer should draw upon successful precedents for inspiration upon how to improve the entrance; at the moment it appears as if a door has been inserted with little thought about the context and relationship with the rest of the building.

Articulation and depth

Brick elevations can be enriched through the use of recesses and projections and there is a dire need for some depth and articulation in this proposal. The designer should explore the massing and form, and break this up; maybe the central part of the building can step forward a few bricks for example. What is the reveal recess at openings? None of this information is forthcoming making me conclude the building is flat and monotonous, demonstrating poor design.

Drawing upon strong brick building precedents will help the building look less like a 'prototype business park training centre'. I have started this process for including some precedents at the end of this document.

A reliance on different colour brickwork to provide the necessary articulation is usually insufficient unless the grain of the bricks provides contrast. If the brickwork is good enough, forming the brick headers from the same brick would be more effective. I would reposition these headers (and probably introduce another header course) these immediately below the roof eaves

to create a stronger transition between differing building elements. Consider how this detail could be used as a banding across the elevations.

Design Longevity

Design features such as the window boxes, spandrel cladding and front dormers have often shown (in the borough) not to demonstrate good design longevity, becoming outdated in terms of visual appearance and workmanship. The window boxes/spandrel infill look to be a tacky alternative, masking a dire need for the elevations to introduce some articulation, depth and architectural detail. These can be done well but this conviction is not forthcoming in this current proposal. We should really not be encouraging new front dormers as part of any development and I am uncomfortable with angled dormers to the back also.

The elevations are flat and monotonous and this is accentuated to the side elevations, where the designer has showed minimal attempt to add any visual interest to help break up the elevations. *Could vertical slot windows be added to the corners for example – check impact on neighbours. Consider the use of recessed window outlines and brick detailing to help rescue this. Introduce obscure windows to the bathroom? See precedents to help improve this.*

Other

An opportunity has been missed to introduce landscaping and screening buffers to the site. The immediate context does have hedgerows and trees to the boundaries and this site would certainly benefit from some screening, considering the scale and design of the development. Similarly the outlook for residents to the rear is poor and landscaping would have helped improving this. The parking arrangement appears quite constrained but Highways would be better advising.

The boundary details/ materials proposed are equally as uninspiring, not utilising an opportunity to improve some of the poor boundary treatments that exist already on the site. Have the stone walls to the front boundary at least been maintained? Clarify what the green circles on the front lawn are.

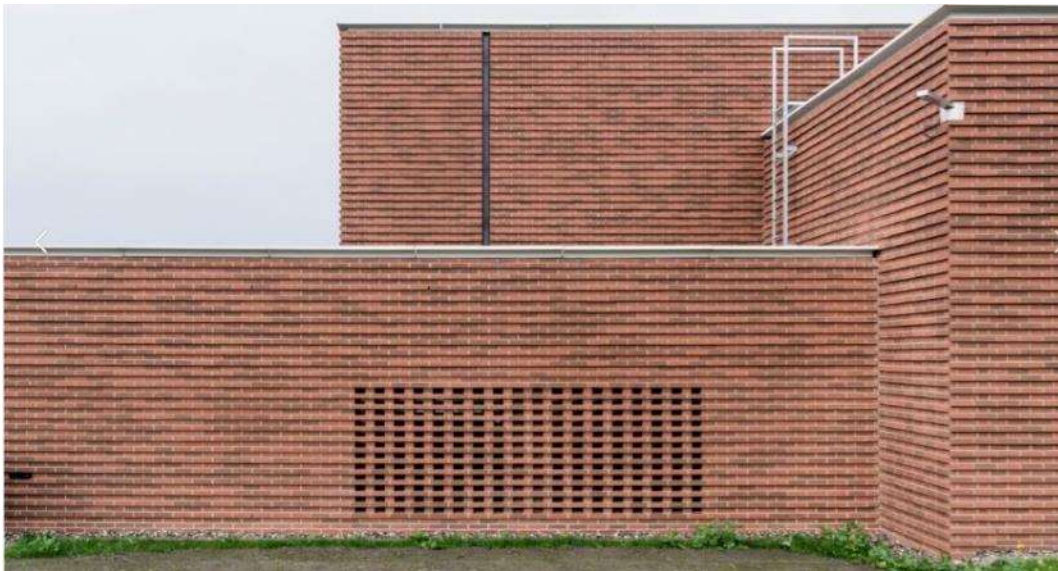
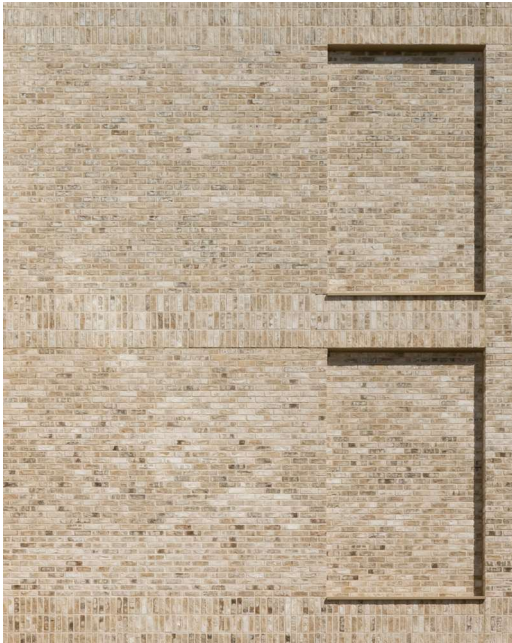
The site does seem over constrained and would benefit from a 1:50 site plan to understand exactly how the building fits into the site in context with the fencing and access road to the rear car park shown in greater clarity.

Provide a contextual street elevation(s).

Design Exploration

The designer would have benefitted from undertaking a design process exploring design precedents, different forms and materials. Despite this being missing, I have attempted to help the designer get started with precedents exploring certain themes.

Blank / Monotonous elevations



Depth / Articulation



Prominent Entrance

