



The Farmhouse, Littleborough

Client: Tim & Lisa Knight

Date: 22/11/2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Enabl on behalf of the applicants, Tim & Lisa Knight. The statement accompanies a planning application for the proposed development at the Farmhouse, Littleborough to provide a replacement house extension along with a subterranean garage and pool.
- 1.2 This statement sets out the conformity of the proposals with the development plan and relevant national policy, as well as any other material considerations having regard to Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Description of Development

- 1.3 The submitted planning application is seeking planning consent for:

Replacement house extension, partial demolition of the existing annex and introduction of a subterranean garage and pool.

Application Documents

- 1.4 This Planning Statement should be read alongside the architectural plans / drawings and supporting documents submitted to accompany the planning application. The application documents comprise:
- Design and Access, prepared by Project 3;
 - Landscape Design & Access Statement, prepared by Make Space;
 - Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ecological Walkover, prepared by E3P;
 - Nocturnal Bat Survey Report, prepared by Seed;
 - Heritage Statement, prepared by BB Heritage Studio;
 - Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by DEP; and
 - Planning Statement, prepared by Enabl (This document).

2. Site and Surroundings

The Site

- 2.1 The site is situated at Hollingworth Road in Littleborough and constitutes a detached house with a contemporary single storey extension and lower ground floor garage. The site benefits from a private driveway, and lawned garden to the north west of the house, including an annex building located by the northern site boundary. The site is currently accessed via gated access off Stockham Lane.
- 2.2 There are four dwellings located to the north east of the site which are the result of a previous barn conversion and extension.
- 2.3 Further details of the site location and context can be found in the Design and Access Statement, produced by Project 3, submitted as part of this application. The Google Map extract below (Figure 1) illustrates the site in the context of its surroundings.



Figure 1. Site context

The Surroundings

- 2.4 The site is located within predominantly residential area. Adjacent to the Farmhouse site is a three storey new built barn type residential block with additional garage. The predominant roof forms are pitched roofs. Front elevations vary between gable fronting and eaves.
- 2.5 The material palette of the nearby properties consists of light buff colour stone, red brick, painted bricks and in several instances a rendered elevation. The roof scape palette is a mixture of slate and clay tile finish.
- 2.6 The neighbouring Woodlands Cafe is a mixture of local stone and contemporary black metal panels. Residential use is reinforced through the provision of supporting local amenities such as the nearby pub and other amenities within the town.
- 2.7 The site benefits from good connectivity to public transport links. The nearest bus stops are located along Hollingwoth Road and Lake Bank, approximately 450m away. The local busses provide regular services to Rochdale, Stansfield and other parts of Littleborough.
- 2.8 The Littleborough train station is located approximately 1.6km to the north (approximately 20 minutes' walk) providing services to further destinations.

Site Designations

- 2.9 In accordance with the adopted Local Plan, the site is located in Green Belt.
- 2.10 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 as defined on Environment Agency's flood risk map and there are no listed buildings within the vicinity of the site. However, the property has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), meaning it is of local significance which merits consideration in planning decisions, but is not a formally designated heritage asset.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.11 Relevant planning application relating to the site has been presented in the table below:

Reference number	Description of Development	Decision	Decision Date
19/00378/HOUS	<i>Proposed rear extension and modifications to form roof terrace .</i>	Refused	February 2020
19/00101/CPL	<i>Application for a certificate of lawfulness for a creation of hard standing comprising stone flags for agricultural use.</i>	Refused	March 2019
14/00757/FUL	<i>Use of land as an extension to the private curtilage of the farmhouse including the erection of a timber outbuilding, outdoor kitchen, access, drive and manoeuvring area and boundary fencing - Retrospective -</i>	Refused Appeal part allowed part dismissed	October 2014 July 2015
13/00377/CPE	<i>Application for certificate of lawful use (existing) for use of land as an extension to the private curtilage of the farmhouse including the erection of a timber outbuilding</i>	Refused	December 2013
11/D54178	<i>Conversion of roof space to form additional living accommodation together with the installation of 6 no. Conservation style roof lights, the installation of a window in the west facing elevation, the installation of 3 no. External timber shutters to rear elevation and the amendment to the driveway gradient</i>	Grant subject to conditions	April 2011
07/D50220	<i>Refurbishment of existing house including construction of single storey extension and lower ground floor garage</i>	Grant subject to conditions	January 2008

3. The Proposed Development

3.1 The proposed redevelopment of the current site have been informed by a detailed assessment of the site particulars and surrounding environment. The accompanying Design and Access Statement prepared by Project 3 sets out the design concept behind the scheme.

3.2 The scheme being brought forward comprises:

Replacement house extension, partial demolition of the existing annex and introduction of a subterranean garage and pool.

Layout and Design

3.3 There are no proposed changes to the scale nor the form of the farmhouse.

3.4 The overall design aspirations have been to provide a more suitable and appropriate form and finishes to the buildings on site by replacing an inefficient round spiral extension, unusable garage and pool and providing a new, more sympathetic extension along with a subterranean garage and pool. The design has been informed by the habitable requirements of a person within a dwellinghouse following the period of time having lived within the property with the extant extension and its usability for residents.

3.5 The proposal also includes demolition of existing annex located to the north-west of the dwelling increasing the amount of grassed area across the site.

3.6 It is considered that the proposed layout has been arranged to best respond to the site's context and best address the site circumstances by converting the existing extension and introducing an underground garage and pool to improve the overall visual impact of the property.

3.7 The material palette of the proposed development has been carefully selected in order to respond to the context of the site. A selective reuse of the current materials is proposed as part of development. Main materials used on site are stone and slate to closely match the existing materiality.

3.8 More details relating to design can be found within the supporting Design and Access Statement.

Internal Layout

3.9 The internal layout of the proposed extension includes:

Ground Floor

- Dining room;
- Kitchen and sitting area;
- Snug;
- Utility room; and
- WC.

First Floor

- 2no. ensuite bedrooms;
- master suite including bathroom, dressing room and bedroom within the first floor;

Second Floor

- 1no. ensuite bedroom;
- Storage area.

3.10 Further details of the internal layouts can be found within the accompanying architectural drawings submitted with this application.

Amenity

3.11 The proposed extension ensures appropriate provision of natural light to all habitable rooms.

Access and Parking

3.12 It is proposed that the existing access is retained. The proposed subterranean garage can accommodate 4no. cars.

3.13 Parking provision for visitors has been allocated to in front of the Farmhouse and can accommodate another 2no. car parking spaces.

3.14 More details relating to site's accessibility can be found within the supporting Design and Access Statement.

Landscaping

- 3.15 It is proposed that as part of the development, minor, but improving, changes are proposed to existing driveway stone walls which are of an unsympathetic stonework and will be enhanced by more appropriate boundary treatment including dry stone and gabion walls.
- 3.16 Furthermore, it is proposed that existing annex is to be demolished and additional grass area is incorporated to further enhance landscaping and reduce the amount of hardstanding across the site.
- 3.17 More landscaping details can be found within the Landscaping Plans and Landscape Design & Access Statement prepared by Make Space.

Pre-Application Engagement

Pre-Application discussions with the Council

- 3.18 On 26th April 2023, Enabl submitted a pre-application advice request to Rochdale Council on behalf of Lisa and Tim Knight. They sought feedback on the principle of development, including a replacement extension and a subterranean garage and pool.
- 3.19 A pre-application response was received on 16th August 2023, including feedback on the design, visual appearance and heritage, amenity, highways and access, and the principle of development in Green Belt. The document also confirmed the list of plans and document required for submission.
- 3.20 A summary of the feedback received during the pre-application process is below.

Principle of Development

- 3.21 The response highlighted that the site is located in Green Belt, and therefore relevant local and national policies will apply. It was confirmed that the main consideration in assessing the principle of development is whether the proposed scheme constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt and, if so, whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated which may outweigh the presumption against development. Amongst others, the response referred to points c) and d) of Paragraph 149 of the NPPF as to the exceptions applicable to the proposal. It was highlighted that '*Whilst the proposed extension would still*

substantially exceed the 35% threshold stated in the SPD and may not meet exemption (c), it would nonetheless represent a marginal reduction in volume of 9.55 cubic metres, which may form a material consideration in the determination of any future application'.

- 3.22 It was confirmed that the subterranean garage and swimming pool, it is considered this development may not result in significant harm to the 'visual openness' of the Green Belt, provided it does not result in a net increase in its existing ground level.

Design, Visual Appearance, and Heritage

- 3.23 The response highlighted that due to the context of the property as a former farm building and its potential heritage interest, the Conservation Officer was consulted for this pre-application. The building was considered to appear unaltered and to retain much of its historical fabric since 1851. It was also considered to significantly contribute to the landscape surrounding Hollingworth Lake and therefore was identified as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).
- 3.24 It was confirmed that the proposed demolition of the annexe would likely have a positive impact on the appearance of the host dwelling and of the significance of the heritage asset.
- 3.25 The response also suggests that the proposed glazed link between the original dwelling and the proposed extension annexe would enhance the significance of the heritage asset.
- 3.26 However, it was highlighted that the extension itself should be reviewed as in its current form it is considered that it may visually compete with the form of the farmhouse and appear obtrusive when viewed from public vantage points.
- 3.27 The proposed removal of the existing boundary treatments and construction of dry stone walls was considered to contribute positively to the character of the farmhouse, subject to the use of suitable stonework.
- 3.28 Overall, it was concluded that subject to appropriate amendments and details, the proposal would 'represent an improvement over the existing annexe and constitute a satisfactory standard of design and visual appearance to the host dwelling and immediate surroundings'.

Amenity

- 3.29 According to the feedback, the proposal, including the subterranean garage and pool, is considered to result in neutral impact on the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.

Highways and Access

- 3.30 The response confirmed that the proposed development would not have any impact on road safety or highways capacity on the wider highway network.
- 3.31 Following the receipt of the pre-application response, the project team worked collaboratively to progress the scheme design which was responding to the comments provided, including further reductions in volume, hardstanding across the site and improvements in permeability.
- 3.32 The scheme was also consulted with a number of co-consultants, including heritage and landscape to ensure any potential impacts in this regard are limited.

4. Planning Policy Context

4.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 state that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 The relevant parts of the adopted development plan Rochdale comprise:

- Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016;
- Unitary Development Plan (UPD) Plan 2006.

4.3 Other planning policy documents relevant to this proposal that are capable of being a material consideration in the determination of this planning application comprise:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021), and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) / Guidance prepared by Rochdale Council.

4.4 Table 4.0 has set out those policies which are relevant to the proposals within this application:

Core Strategy	
Policy	Policy Wording
P1 Improving image	<i>We will require high quality design in all new developments, and this will be particularly important in the following areas, which are crucial to the image of the borough:</i> <i>1. Key gateways into the borough (see Spatial Strategy key diagram and Township delivery diagrams);</i> <i>2. Local gateways to centres, communities and attractions;</i> <i>3. Local Improvement Corridors and those stretches of main transport corridors which are currently characterless or unattractive (see township delivery diagrams);</i> <i>4. Town centres; and 5. Prominent sites, regeneration areas and key visitor attractions. We will ensure new development improves the image of the borough by:</i> <i>a. Requiring design which is of a high standard, demonstrating innovation and</i>

	<i>originality;</i> <i>b. Working with developers of major developments to incorporate public art in the design of buildings and spaces or contribute to public art projects as appropriate;</i> <i>c. Helping to 'green' the urban environment, for example by securing tree planting on sites and along streets and roads;</i> <i>d. Promoting the development and re-use of under-used land and buildings, maximising the potential for heritage assets to provide a sense of place and image; and</i> <i>e. Creating people-friendly, safe, vibrant, uncluttered public areas</i>
P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage	<i>1. We will protect and enhance the borough's character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the qualities of its landscapes, utilising the considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. We will do this by:</i> <i>a. Requiring new development to integrate successfully with the key natural features of the borough, e.g. river valleys and the Pennine landscape;</i> <i>b. Requiring new development to take opportunities to protect and open up important views of hills and valleys which are part of the borough's unique character;</i> <i>c. Restoring the River Roch and other water bodies to their place as key and attractive features of the borough, including opening up waterways where they have been covered, and enhancing their setting, heritage assets and biodiversity potential;</i> <i>d. Protecting, enhancing and utilising outstanding cultural landscapes, such as the Cheesden Valley area and around Littleborough and Hollingworth Lake; and</i> <i>e. Conserving and enhancing townscape character.</i> <i>2. We will protect the borough's heritage by:</i> <i>a. Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:</i> <i>i. Four outstanding conservation areas: Central Rochdale, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and Rock Nook / Summit;</i> <i>ii. Other designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments;</i> <i>iii. The heritage of the Co-operative movement, the Rochdale Pioneers and the Labour movement;</i> <i>iv. The Edgar Wood and J. H. Sellers cultural heritage;</i> <i>v. The heritage of the seventeenth and eighteenth century vernacular tradition; and</i>

	<i>vi. The engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways.</i> <i>b. Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration;</i> <i>c. Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and</i> <i>d. Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard</i>
P3 Improving design of new development	<i>We will require all new developments, including associated landscaping, regardless of location in the borough, to adhere to high standards of design. The following design principles should be adhered to wherever relevant:</i> <i>• Enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general;</i> <i>• Ensure that buildings contribute positively to the townscape, and are well proportioned;</i> <i>• Incorporating design measures that design out crime and ensure developments and spaces are safe to use and access (including lighting as appropriate);</i> <i>• Provide an appropriate mix of uses and consider the needs of all sections of society;</i> <i>• Ensure a development is easy to move through and get around, especially for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, disabled people and emergency service vehicles;</i> <i>• Provide a hierarchy of routes, streets and spaces, relating positively to visual connections between the development and its surroundings;</i> <i>• Ensure that the intended functions of buildings and spaces are easily understood, and their entrances appropriately located and visible;</i> <i>• Ensure buildings can be easily adapted to meet future/alternative needs of occupants;</i> <i>• Minimise impact upon the environment, and help adapt to the impacts of climate change, including by re-using existing buildings and materials (maximising the benefits of existing embodied energy) and utilising sustainable drainage (Policies G1 and G2);</i> <i>• Design buildings and spaces so that quality and appearance can be maintained over time; and</i> <i>• Reduce the monotony and visual impact of car parking areas by using substantial and well integrated landscaping.</i> <i>All developments should have regard to the principles outlined in the following</i>

	<i>documents (or equivalent documents which replace them), which set out in detail the Council's design expectations for new development:</i> • <i>Urban Design Guides SPDs, September 2007</i> - o <i>Urban Design Guide SPD, September 2007;</i> - o <i>Residential Design Guide SPD, September 2007;</i> - o <i>Public Realm Design Guide SPD, September 2007;</i> • <i>Littleborough Town Design Statement SPG, 2005;</i> • <i>Shopfronts and Security Shutters SPD, 2012; and</i> • <i>Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD, 2016.</i> <i>Design and access statements and design briefs must include demonstration of how these design principles have been taken into account in the design of development proposals.</i>
G4 Protecting green belt land	<i>We will continue to protect from development the following areas of Green Belt:</i> • <i>South of the borough: the urban fringe countryside in the south where its primary role will be to prevent neighbouring towns from merging (i.e. land between the towns of Rochdale, Middleton and Heywood and between those and towns outside the borough); and</i> • <i>North of the borough: the Pennine rural fringe to the north and east of the borough where its primary role will be to prevent encroachment into the countryside (i.e. land north of Rochdale and Heywood, east of Rochdale). Development will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed not to be inappropriate by national planning policies unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. We will encourage the continued operation of major developed sites in the Green Belt and support limited infilling and redevelopment where this maintains beneficial uses and does not harm the Green Belt.</i>
DM1 General development requirements	<i>All development proposals, including changes of use of land and buildings, extensions and alterations, will be expected to demonstrate that they:</i> <i>a. Are of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area;</i> <i>b. Are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users;</i> <i>c. Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy;</i> <i>d. Mitigate against any impacts due to noise, air, dust, light and odour pollution, traffic generation or inadequate access, where such mitigation is identified as being necessary;</i> <i>e. Provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring,</i>

	<i>and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location;</i> <i>f. Do not have an adverse impact on health, through its impact or the effect of existing problems e.g. land contamination, or poor air quality;</i> <i>g. Provide, or demonstrate the availability of, the service and community infrastructure necessary to meet local needs e.g. local shops, community, leisure and sport facilities and provision of open space;</i> <i>h. Minimise opportunities for crime against people or property;</i> <i>i. Take account of ground conditions including unstable or contaminated land - where a potential risk exists, a survey should be carried out and any necessary remedial measures identified and carried out;</i> <i>j. Incorporate, where appropriate, high quality landscape schemes;</i> <i>k. Have assessed whether the development may be affected by ground instability;</i> <i>l. Have considered the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure, and any need for additional capacity; and</i> <i>m. Do not lead to impacts detrimental to the conservation interests of European Protected Sites.</i>								
T2 Improving Accessibility	<i>We will improve accessibility by locating development where good access to public transport is available or can be provided, backed by measures to reduce the need for travel and effective provision for cyclists, pedestrians and people with impaired mobility. Development will be appropriately located to minimise the need to travel by car and the number and length of car trips made to access local amenities. (...)</i> <i>f. We will require developments to provide parking in compliance with the Council's Car Parking Standards (see Appendix 5);</i> <table><tr><th>Development Type</th><th>Maximum Standard for Car Parking Provision</th><th>Minimum Standard for Cycle Space Provision</th><th>Minimum Standard for Powered Two Wheeled Vehicle Parking Provision</th></tr><tr><td>2+ Bedroomed Houses outside Town Centres</td><td>2 spaces per dwelling, (not including a garage)</td><td>No Standard</td><td>No Standard</td></tr></table>	Development Type	Maximum Standard for Car Parking Provision	Minimum Standard for Cycle Space Provision	Minimum Standard for Powered Two Wheeled Vehicle Parking Provision	2+ Bedroomed Houses outside Town Centres	2 spaces per dwelling, (not including a garage)	No Standard	No Standard
Development Type	Maximum Standard for Car Parking Provision	Minimum Standard for Cycle Space Provision	Minimum Standard for Powered Two Wheeled Vehicle Parking Provision						
2+ Bedroomed Houses outside Town Centres	2 spaces per dwelling, (not including a garage)	No Standard	No Standard						
Unitary Development Plan									
G/D/2 Green Belt	<i>The green belt boundary is defined on the proposals map. The green belt will be protected from inappropriate development in order to satisfy the purposes and objectives for green belt set out in ppg 2, and in particular to maintain the framework of open land separating and surrounding the urban areas of the borough.</i> <i>The green belt boundary incorporates one minor change from the previous development plan at haugh fold, newhey. (see proposal d/3 below)</i>								
D/7 Extensions To Residential	<i>In determining planning applications for extensions to existing dwellings (including garages and ancillary domestic buildings within the existing curtilage)</i>								

Properties	<i>in the Green Belt, the Council will wish to be satisfied that:</i> <i>a) The extension is of a scale and character which does not conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it; and</i> <i>b) The extension does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and is not visually detrimental by reason of its siting, materials or design.</i>
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Other Material Considerations

4.5 The following Rochdale Council SPDs are considered pertinent to this application:

- **Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development (June 2016)** - The purpose of this guidance is to assist in the process of ensuring high quality design for residential development throughout the Borough. The guidance focuses on specific design issues it is considered should be addressed by developers in formulating development proposals and which the Council will have regard to in considering applications for residential development, other proposals which affect nearby residential uses, and for alterations and extensions to existing dwellings, including development within the curtilage. This guidance is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.6 As part of the determination process, material considerations inform the acceptability of planning proposals. The Framework sets out the nationally controlling policies which inform development, these cover the various topics underpinning the presumption in favour of sustainable development which runs through the whole of the framework captured by paragraph 11 and as the Framework read as a whole.
- 4.7 Paragraph 38 seeks that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, using the full range of planning tools available, working with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the area.
- 4.8 Section 8 of the Framework seeks the promotion of healthy and safe communities, with schemes providing for green infrastructure, providing legible routes, and encouraging walking and cycling.

- 4.9 Section 9 promotes sustainable transport to ensure potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed. Schemes should seek to promote walking, cycling and public transport where possible. To support development proposals safe and suitable access should be achievable for all users. Paragraph 109 stipulates that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
- 4.10 Section 11 supports efficient use of land by giving substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for identified needs. Promoting and supporting development of under-utilised buildings especially if to meet identified needs. Paragraph 122 sets out that development which takes into account different forms of development required, availability of infrastructure and services, importance of securing well-design, attractive and healthy places making efficient use of land should be supported.
- 4.11 Section 12 of the Framework seeks to achieve well-designed places with the creation of high-quality buildings, good design as a key aspect of sustainable development. Proposals should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture being sympathetic to local character, while not preventing increased densities.
- 4.12 Section 14 meets the challenge of climate change and flooding. New development being planned to avoid increased vulnerability to range of impacts arising from climate change and being sited to reduce greenhouse gas requirements. Developments should be positioned in areas of least risk of flooding when with proposed end users who would be at risk.
- 4.13 Section 15 sets out the protection and enhancement of the natural environment with development proposals enhancing sites of biodiversity value, recognise wider value from natural capital.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.14 The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is Governments supporting guidance which consolidates a series of advice documents into one online database. The PPG provides a guide for all development according to the relevant sectors / locations to which are relevant.

The proposed development has had consideration of the various pertinent guidance sections within the progression of the scheme.

5. Development Plan Compliance

- 5.1 The proposed development compliance against the development plan in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning Act 2004 is set out within this section.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 The proposal is seeking to partially demolish the existing annex and provide a replacement house extension along with a subterranean garage and pool.
- 5.3 The application site is allocated as Green Belt under saved Policy G/D/2 of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006). According to this policy, Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in order to maintain the framework of open land separating and surrounding the urban areas of the borough. Furthermore, Policy G4 of the Core Strategy seeks to restrict development within the Green Belt to the limited types of development which are deemed appropriate by national planning policies unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.
- 5.4 Paragraph 147 of the NPPF states that, as with previous Green Belt policy, *"inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances"*. Paragraph 148 adds *"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."*
- 5.5 Paragraph 149 of the NPPF establishes that *"a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions are:*
- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
 - b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
 - c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

e) limited infilling in villages;

f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and 44

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

– not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or

– not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

- 5.6 Section 5.20 of the SPD states that "*normally, in principle, extensions that result in up to a 35% increase in floor space or volume over and above the original dwelling would normally be considered appropriate and not disproportionate (this calculation would include previous extensions to the original dwelling, which is defined as the dwelling as it was first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948). However, the characteristics of properties and proposals will vary significantly and there may be instances when a 35% increase would be considered disproportionate and other occasions when a greater than 35% increase may be considered proportionate.*"

The pre-application response received from the Council states that '*Whilst the proposed extension would still substantially exceed the 35% threshold stated in the SPD and may not meet exemption (c), it would nonetheless represent a marginal reduction in volume of 9.55 cubic metres, which may form a material consideration in the determination of any future application*'.

Due to the fact that the existing built form on site already exceeds the allowed 35%, the proposal constitutes a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. By that nature, the proposal does not benefit from this exception; and therefore, is inappropriate development unless material considerations state otherwise.

Paragraph 138 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes of Green Belt, including;

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

Due to domestic character of the proposal, it will not impact upon any of the above established purposes of Green Belt. Therefore, the only fundamental aim of Green Belt is to keep land permanently open as stated in Paragraph 137 of the NPPF.

It is important to highlight that although the proposal has to be considered as inappropriate development in Green Belt, the level of harm resulting from this proposal is reduced when compared with the extant position due to a betterment in Green Belt openness following the overall reduction in volume across the site. It is therefore considered that material considerations exist in this case.

For the purpose of the calculations, the mentioned before annex, although detached, is considered as an extension element due to its domestic use and character.

This approach was previously applied and considered acceptable in a number of cases. Appeal decision APP/N0410/W/22/3307640 (June 2023) refers to the High Court decision NCN: [2022] EWHC 2145 (Admin) and states: '*An outbuilding does not have to be attached to a dwelling to be an extension for the purposes of paragraph 149 (c). Relevant case law makes it clear that the paragraph is not to be interpreted as solely being confined to physically attached structures but that an extension for the purposes of that provision can include structures which are physically detached from the building of which they are an extension.*'

Another case relating to the outbuilding also confirms that detached buildings can be considered as extension to the dwelling: '*It would be in the same location on the site, relatively close to the dwelling and within a group of buildings closely associated with it.*

Therefore, I am satisfied that the proposed outbuilding can be considered as an extension to the dwelling' (APP/T3725/D/21?3278974).

As stated above, paragraph 149 lists as one of its exceptions to inappropriate development, the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

- 5.7 The proposed development seeks to remove the existing extension, swimming pool and annex (partial), and provide a replacement extension, embanked garage and swimming pool.

Volume

Since the pre-application process, additional changes have been made to the scheme resulting in further reduction in volume.

As presented in detail within the supporting Design and Access Statement, the proposal would result in reduction of volume when compared to the existing additions on site. The volume of the existing extras on site equals 1054.82 m³, while volume of the proposed extras equals 1009.38m³. The proposal therefore results in reduction in volume by 45.44m³. This is considerably more than what have been achieved during the pre-application stage (9.55m³).

Footprint

In regards to footprint, when compared between the existing and the proposed extension only, the proposal would result in reduction by 30.52m².

When compared between all existing and proposed extensions, the proposal would result in footprint increase by 65.83m². However, due to the character of the proposed elements, being below ground and therefore not visible from outside the site's boundary, and the additional visual enhancement resulting from the proposed demolition of the existing annex, it is considered that whilst the proposal would result in slightly increased footprint, it would also result in significant visual improvements and increase in Green Belt openness, both of which are prioritised by the national policy when it comes to development in Green Belt.

It is important to note that when compared between all existing and proposed extensions, however excluding the swimming pool area, the proposal would still result in reduction in footprint by 9.32m².

The pool proposed is modest in scale and under permitted development a greater swimming pool could be introduced as a fallback which could have a similar floorspace to the overall garage and pool as currently proposed.

The applicants previously considered provision of a swimming pool within the garden area under Class E (a) of Permitted Development Rights, however, considering separate plans for replacement extension and subterranean garage (which on their own result in both reduction in volume and footprint to what is currently on site), decided to include a swimming pool in the scheme to minimise any visual impact and having in mind Green Belt openness and overall views across the site.

This 'fallback' position (permitted development rights under Class E for a covered swimming pool building) was recently presented at the appeal ref. APP/T2215/A/13/2200600, where the inspector highlighted that there would be no apparent loss of openness and virtually no visual impact at all from the development (subterranean swimming pool with tennis court over). It was agreed that the substantial harm due to inappropriateness clearly outweigh the advantages of avoiding a surface pool building and controlling further permitted development on the site.

Furthermore, the inspector decided that no further restrictions on permitted development rights are necessary as by permitting the proposed pool, the likelihood of requiring another is minimal and does not justify modifying permitted development rights.

Finally, the inspector concluded that *'the harm by inappropriateness is clearly outweighed by allowing this development rather than having a permitted development building above ground. (...) that the advantages of allowing this development are so great that they constitute very special circumstances and justify granting planning permission in this instance.'*

Hardstanding/Permeable Surfaces/Soft Landscaping

To further enhance the visual impact, it is proposed that the amount of existing hardstanding is reduced across the site to be replaced by permeable surfaces resulting in additional 81m² of permeable surfaces across the site.

Additionally, it is proposed that soft landscaping is introduced above the proposed embarked garage and pool creating a green roof, further enhancing the visual impact and biodiversity

on site. The total increase in soft landscaping as part of the proposal extends to 228m².

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that "*the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*"

It is considered that the proposed development would result in betterment in terms of Green Belt openness and overall visual impact when compared with the existing development on site. Whilst it would result in slight increase of the overall footprint, the proposed embarked garage and pool would not be visible and would not have any visual impact as it would be incorporated into the existing topography of the site, while demolition of the existing annex would further open the views across the site.

A number of cases for a subterranean garage in Green Belt have been previously allowed on the basis that there would be no significant visual impact upon the building and its setting. Appeal decision APP/Q3630/A/00/1051869 states: '*About a third of the area in the proposed extension would be provided underground for car parking, and this volume would have no significant visual impact upon the building and its setting. Also, whilst the combined volume of the existing and proposed extensions represent a high increase over the existing building as at 1986, the resulting building mass would remain exceedingly small in relation to the large open area of the grounds. As noted, it has no significant effect on the appearance and open character of the Green Belt*' (2001).

Similar view was highlighted in the appeal decision APP/Z4718/A/01/1070648 (2001). The inspector stated that '*The garage would therefore not be seen to extend this building or affect its subservient status to the original parts of the house across the forecourt (...) the existence of the garage would only be indicated by its doors leading off the entrance court, and I consider that in this location [rural] the slightly higher level of the lawn would not affect the character of the Green Belt or its openness, which is defined by Paragraph 1.4 of PPG2 as its most important attribute*'. This view was still considered relevant/applicable in the later appeal in 2010 relating to the same property (APP/Z4718/E/11/2149040).

Another appeal was allowed for a large underground basement to accommodate a swimming pool, sauna and steam room (APP/N5090/D/17/3174495). In this case, the inspector decided that the proposal would add considerably to the internal floor area of the

existing house (therefore volume), but not increase the footprint (as located directly under the existing building). Thus, no material effect on the external appearance of the building or its visual bulk would arise. In his opinion it would not therefore result in a disproportionate addition to the existing building.

The proposed embarked garage and pool which is subject to this application, although not located directly underneath the existing dwelling are proposed underneath the existing slope and therefore would also not have any material impact on the external appearance of the site.

More recently in 2022, an appeal was allowed for a subterranean garage (APP/P4225/D/21/3283323) after inspector making decision that a subterranean garage would result in less harm and visual improvements to the previously approved pen air parking spaces: *'I have little doubt that the proposed development would result in a marked visual improvement to the parking proposal in the previous scheme. This would be achieved through the overall softening of the proposed development, primarily through its green roof and avoiding notable and prominent features, such as the previously approved retaining walls.*

The proposed development would utilise the existing topography of the site, accommodating a subterranean garage and pool under the existing hill, and therefore not result in any visual impact on Green Belt openness. Furthermore, the proposed garage and reduction in the amount of hardstanding across the site will reduce the ability to park outdoors.

To conclude, the two aspects presented above, including the reduction of the existing built form resulting in a betterment in Green Belt openness from extant, and the fallback position relating to the Permitted Development option for the swimming pool which would result in a bigger harm to Green Belt than the proposed development, in conjunction constitute the very special circumstances required to outweigh the harm caused by the development which would be restricted solely by definition nature that inappropriate development is harmful but for no other purposes.

Taking into account the above, the proposed development is therefore considered to be in line with Policies DM1 and P4 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies G/D/2 and D/7 of the UDP, and Section 13 of the NPPF, and the principle of development of this scale and character on site is considered acceptable.

Design and Visual Appearance

- 5.8 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF requires new development to be "*visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping*" in addition to ensuring they are "*sympathetic to local character.*" Paragraph 134 seeks to encourage "*innovative designs which... 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.*"
- 5.9 The design of the proposed extension seeks to provide a more appropriate form than the existing one by incorporating characteristics of a barn and being subservient to the main farmhouse. The proposal although considered to be of high quality design, enhances the significance of the historic fabric of the original building. The glazed link visually differentiates the original dwelling and the new proposal lightens the overall form and appearance in the location.
- 5.10 It is also proposed to selectively reuse the current materials on site as part of the development. Main materials used on site are stone and slate, which are the main materials to be used to closely match the existing materiality.
- 5.11 The intention is not to bring a new soil nor take away current extent as the aim is not to affect the current topographical configuration beyond the acceptable point and its positioning and visibility around the Hollingworth Lake.
- 5.12 Minor changes are also proposed to existing driveway stone walls which are of an unsympathetic stonework and will be enhanced by more appropriate boundary treatment, as presented in detail in the supporting DAS and LDAS.
- 5.13 The proposed subterranean garage and pool is considered to have minimal impact on setting due to its character and incorporation of a green roof.
- 5.14 Partial demolition of the annex will further enhance the views across the site by reducing the building mass and opening views.
- 5.15 Policy DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy require development proposals to be "*of high quality design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area*" and to "*enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is*

positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general." In addition, Section 5.1 of the SPD states development proposals should be *"in keeping with the host property and generally should be subservient to it."*

- 5.16 A Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal has been prepared by DEP and submitted as part of the application. The report concludes that the landscape effects have been assessed as being *Slight-moderate* for the Upland Pastures in which the site is located, *Negligible* for the Open Moorland which provides a backdrop to the site to the north and west and *Slight* for the urban areas to the south of the site which includes Smithy Bridge.
- 5.17 It was highlighted that the replacement of the existing annexe with a new extension more sympathetic to the non-designated historical asset would have a positive impact on the appearance of the site. The glazed link would further enhance the significance of the asset by providing a clear distinction between the old and new. The use of local stone and building materials would also help the development be more in keeping with the local landscape character.
- 5.18 In regards to the subterranean garage and swimming pool, it is considered these will be hidden from view by being built into the existing sloping lawn to the west of the farmhouse. The trees to the west and east of the site would be retained as would the sloping hay meadow to the south of the site which falls outside of the development boundary but remains within the clients ownership. This will ensure that the aspect and character of the development as a traditional farmhouse sat in a prominent position on a hillside within the upland pastures overlooking Hollingworth Lake would be retained.
- 5.19 The report confirmed that the above ground development would not harm the 'visual openness' of the Green Belt in which the site is located as the existing extension is just being replaced and the subterranean garage and swimming pool would be hidden from view. The site would remain as a detached farmhouse sat within upland pastures. Therefore the purpose of Green Belt which surrounds the site would be preserved and it would not cause any significant effects on the local visual amenity.
- 5.20 Furthermore, the changes that the development would have on the visual amenity of the surrounding properties, recreational users and wider landscape have been assessed as

being *Low* to *Negligible* and in some cases *None*.

- 5.21 It was concluded that the overall visual effects of the development would result in two *Slight-moderate* visual effects for the residential properties nearest to the site, this would be expected given the closeness of these properties to the site, the nature of development and change. However once the development is complete these have been described as having a *neutral impact* on the overall visual amenity for the occupiers of these residential properties given the positive changes to the replacement extension and the sympathetic design of the subterranean garage and swimming pool.
- 5.22 The remainder of the visual receptors around the wider landscape have been assessed as only experiencing *Slight to Negligible* visual effects and two have would experience no visual effects as a result of the development proposals.
- 5.23 The reports highlights that once the development is complete and the landscape around the site including the existing trees, sloping lawn and adjacent hay meadow is continued to be maintained and sympathetically managed then the development will continue to contribute to the character of the landscape and surrounding visual amenity.
- 5.24 It is therefore considered that the proposal is in line with Policies DM1, P2 and P3 of the Core Strategy, relevant local SPDs and Sections 12, 13 and 15 of the NPPF.

Heritage

- 5.25 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states, "*in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."*
- 5.26 Furthermore, Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states "*the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining*

the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

- 5.27 A Heritage Statement has been prepared by BB Heritage Studio and submitted as part of the application in order to assess and understand the particular nature of the significance of heritage assets which will be affected by proposed development.
- 5.28 The report considers the nature of the significance of the proposed site, adjacent heritage assets and the wider landscape setting. It has assessed the Farmhouse to be a non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.29 It was concluded that the proposals are considered on balance and overall to be beneficial and do not result in harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. Alongside the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the report has demonstrated that the scheme ensures that the landscape and key views around Hollingworth Lake are protected and enhanced and that the proposals are overall beneficial to the non-designated heritage asset itself.
- 5.30 On this basis the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of its external appearance and is therefore in compliance with Policies DMA11, P2, P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, and Sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF.

Amenity & Landscaping

- 5.31 The proposal due to its subterranean character is not considered to have any impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, as confirmed in the supporting LVIA prepared by DEP.
- 5.32 A Landscape Design and Access Statement along with details Landscaping Plans have been prepared by Make Space and submitted as part of this application.
- 5.33 In order to ensure the visual impact of the proposal is minimised, no major changes to landscaping have been proposed across the site. The only elements include incorporation of drystone wall to improve the field boundary, incorporation of permeable green gap paving to the front of the man property and at the entrance to the proposed garage, improvements to driveway and removal of hardstanding area to the north of the site to be covered by grass as

previously proposed during the pre-application stage.

- 5.34 The roof of the subterranean garage/pool is proposed to constitute a green roof to ensure no visual impact of the proposal within this part of the site.
- 5.35 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policies DM1 and P2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and Sections 12 and 15 of the NPPF.

Access and Parking

- 5.36 There are no changes proposed to the existing access. The proposed driveway will be constructed from permeable materials to ensure satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site and to prevent an increased risk of flooding as a result of the development.
- 5.37 The proposed driveway will provide access for both pedestrians and vehicles to the site and steps / gradients comply with the relevant design standards.
- 5.38 Furthermore, an existing part of the driveway to the north-east of the host dwelling would be covered in permeable grass / pavement mix providing 2no. car parking spaces. The driveway would also be extended towards the north-west to accommodate the proposed subterranean garage for 4no. cars.
- 5.39 Given the siting of the property in a private access road away from the adopted highway, it is considered the proposal would not have any impact on road safety or highways capacity on the wider highway network and therefore complies with Policy DM1 and T2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, and paragraph 20 and Section 9 of the NPPF.

Ecology

- 5.40 The planning application is supported by a Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ecological Walkover prepared by E3P.
- 5.41 According to the report, all three buildings were assessed as having Moderate bat roost potential due to gaps underneath tiles on both gable ends. Starling were seen entering a gap underneath the tiles on the north-west facing wall of the main residential property and is likely that the birds seen were nesting.

- 5.42 It was highlighted that two separate Nocturnal Bat Surveys are required on all three buildings between May and September, with at least one survey between May and August (inclusive).
- 5.43 It was also recommended that works or any vegetation should be removed outside of the breeding bird season. If this is not possible, a nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hrs before works commence. If a nest, or nest in construction, is located, then a stand-off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged.
- 5.44 As recommended, Nocturnal Bat Surveys have been carried out and Report completed by Seed. According to the document, bat activity was recorded consistently throughout the survey, with common and widespread species being identified within the local area. Foraging and commuting activity was observed and recorded by all vantage points.
- 5.45 It was concluded that as no bats were identified emerging from the buildings, it is not anticipated that roosting bats will be impacted by the proposed development. No further surveys are required with the proposed development. It was however recommended that lighting mitigation measures are implemented to protect foraging and commuting bats within the local area.
- 5.46 On this basis, it is considered that the scheme complies with relevant policies of the Local Plan and Section 15 of the NPPF.

6. Planning Balance

- 6.1 The proposal has been considered against the Development plan and material considerations in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Planning Act 2004. As part of the assessment, the principles of sustainable development as defined within the Framework to establish a presumption are considered below:

Economic Benefits

- During the construction phase, the proposed development would support a number of direct and indirect jobs within the construction industry and associated supply chains.

Social Benefits

- The proposal will provide a high quality extension to a residential dwellings along with a subterranean garage and pool, addressing specific needs and desires of the owners.

Environmental Benefits

- Due to partial demolition of the annex, the proposal will enhance the views across the site and increase Green Belt openness in this area.
- The site is situated within a sustainable location not impacting upon any statutory wildlife sites. It is also located within Flood Zone 1, where probability of flooding is very low.
- The proposal incorporates landscaping elements which result in a reduced amount of hardstanding and an increased amount of soft landscaping across the site, contributing to the local environment.

- 6.2 In considering the planning balance on the proposals, the scheme has been evidenced to providing a sustainable development such that the benefits of allowing the proposal would outweigh any adverse impacts which may arise as a result. It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with the Development Plan and consequently the proposals should be approved without delay in accordance with paragraph 11(c) of the NPPF and Policy SD1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy.