

URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Design Officer	Azhar Kapadi
Date	14.07.25
Application Reference	25/00490/HOUS
Address	15 Woodfield Road, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 1NF
Proposal	Alterations to existing roof including increase in height, two storey front extensions, front dormer extensions, single storey side extension, alterations to existing rear extension, alterations to existing fenestration and application of render to all elevations

Introduction

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

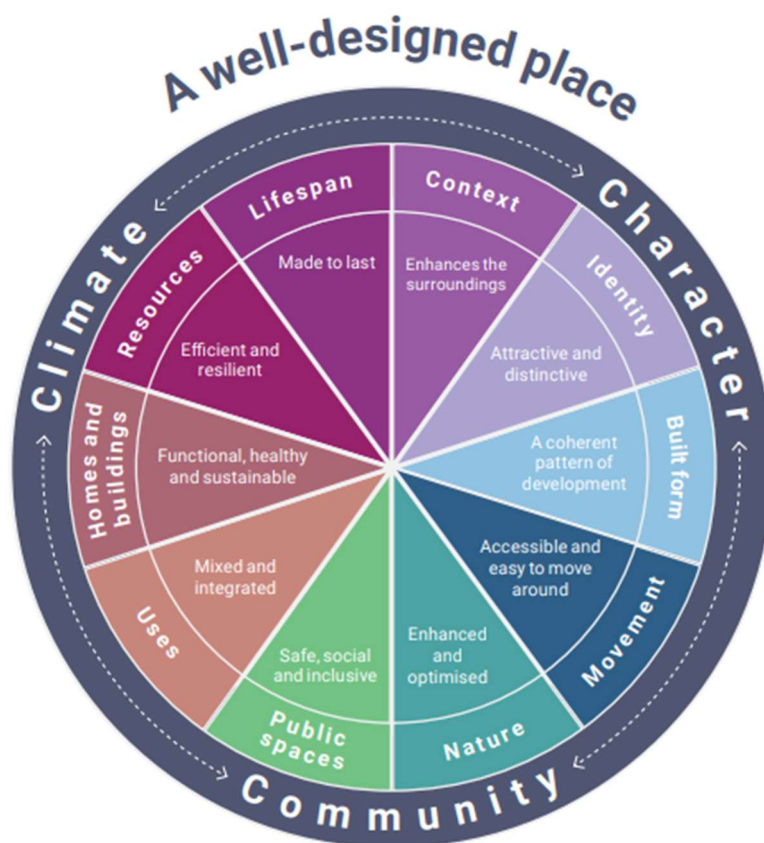


Figure: The ten characteristics of a well-designed place

Source: National Design Guide, 2021

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Reason(s) for Consultation

Building / Urban design

Scheme Image(s)



Source: Application submission

Assessment

This assessment has been made against:

National Guidance:

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

Local Policy:

- Rochdale Core Strategy policies:
 - S03 – To improve design, image and quality of place
 - P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
 - DMI (General Development Requirements)
- Supplementary Planning Documents:
 - Oldham and Rochdale Urban Design Guide

The Unitary Development Plan

- G/H/I - Housing
- G/BE/I - Design Quality;

SUMMARY

Despite some diverse architectural styles on the street, this weak architectural response makes the house appear disruptive and incompatible for its location. A workshop with the agent would be beneficial to address these concerns. A significant overhaul in the design is required.

Furthermore, I would like to be consulted on any resubmission proposals.

Design Approach

Overall, the proposal presents a disappointing design approach. A design and access statement would have really helped the application which would have hopefully allowed the designer to undertake research on the site context, developing a stronger design response aided by strong architectural precedents. Instead, a classical design, pastiche in its nature is thrust upon a dwelling with very little rationale.

Context

The general composition of the street consists of detached houses with distinctive post-war features, such as simpler gabled roofs and modest proportions. There is a general theme of projecting gable elevations in variety of different styles, some more successful than others.

The street demonstrates both good and bad examples of design quality and the BHL references drawing upon good contextual examples and where examples are poor, not justifying 'more of the same'.



Positive examples of context (above)
Negative examples of context (below)



Existing property

The current property features a double-height, glazed bay and a partially rendered finish. Along with the pastiche elements of the door, portico, and rendered boundary wall, these elements already create a disjointed architectural aesthetic.

Contemporary design trends throughout the borough often quickly become dated and fail to withstand the test of time. This is evident in the rendered boundary wall of the existing property and the grey brick wall of the property across the road, both of which are incongruous with the overall streetscape. There is concern that the proposed design for the dwelling will further exacerbate this existing architectural disharmony.



Design Language

The proposed design exhibits a reliance on pastiche architectural references, which would negatively impact the streetscape. Its stark contrast with surrounding properties and weak contextual integration are significant concerns. The incorporation of classical features, such as friezes and architraves lead to a discordant aesthetic and as discussed earlier, a completely different approach is necessary.

The proposed elevations exacerbate this architectural haphazardness. The individual window designs are incongruent with the street's character. Furthermore, the single-story side wing appears to be an afterthought, disrupting an already disjointed front elevation. The proposal intends raising the roof and this should be reviewed alongside the immediate context.

Scale and context

Even if the street is not characterized by a single architectural style, new designs are still expected to integrate naturally within the existing context. Properties that demonstrate depth, articulation, and a comfortable footprint, such as 17 and 19 Woodfield Road, serve as better examples of appropriate design.

The raising of the roof and the inclusion of front dormers are strongly advised against. The vertical emphasis of the windows and glazing further exacerbates this issue. The roof is visually overwhelming, creating a top-heavy and disproportionate appearance compared to neighbouring homes, leading to a dominant and intrusive visual presence in the streetscape.

Material Palette

The proposed design's large glazing-to-masonry ratio has significantly contributed to a loss of the dwelling's identity, resulting in a confused attempt to be simultaneously contemporary, grand, and historic all at the same time.

The street generally maintains a consistent colour palette - with the exception of the house directly opposite. These serve as examples of how departing from a cohesive material and colour scheme can negatively affect the street scene. While render is present in the local context, its more recent applications have often aged poorly and deteriorated quickly. Should render be considered, its application should be limited and combined with high-quality, textured brickwork that is more fitting for the context. This would be better in a top half application opposed to how it is presented with this scheme.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposed architectural response is weak, characterized by mismatched architectural references that would make the house stand out for all the wrong reasons. Strip back the classical references, the dwelling design is notably bland and devoid of visual interest.

Recommendations

- **Design Statement:** Produce a comprehensive design statement that references positive contextual examples and is supported by strong architectural precedents. A robust design development process is highly recommended. Do not use this document to justify the same design
- **Design Approach:** Revisit the entire design approach. Eliminate pastiche references and prioritize higher-quality materials and appropriate architectural detailing. Provide further information on details such as window reveals, show window openings, drainpipes etc.
- **Roof Form:** The roof form requires a more convincing and less excessive design. The proposed front dormers are unsightly and will not be supported.
- **Side Extension:** The single-story side extension should be removed entirely or, at a minimum, significantly set back from the main projecting elevation.