

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 24/00342/HOUS**

|                                         |                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Application Number:</b>              | 24/00342/HOUS                                                                                       |
| <b>Location:</b>                        | 23 Alkrington Hall Road South, Middleton, M24 1NJ                                                   |
| <b>Proposal:</b>                        | Single storey side extension and two storey rear extension to form lower ground floor accommodation |
| <b>Applicant:</b>                       | Mr Steve Kennedy                                                                                    |
| <b>Case Officer:</b>                    | Bob Melling                                                                                         |
| <b>DETERMINATION DATE</b><br>11.07.2024 | <b>EXT OF TIME</b>                                                                                  |
| <b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>                  | <b>Refuse</b>                                                                                       |

|                   |                                               |          |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>DELEGATION</b> | <b>Applicant a Council Member or officer?</b> | <b>N</b> |
|                   | <b>Contrary to previous decision?</b>         | <b>N</b> |
|                   | <b>Called in or Planning Panel objection?</b> | <b>N</b> |

|                 |                                          |          |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>COMMENTS</b> | <b>Planning Panel comments received?</b> | <b>N</b> |
|                 | <b>Neighbour comments received?</b>      | <b>Y</b> |

|                   |                                                                             |            |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>CONDITIONS</b> | <b>Pre-commencement conditions proposed?</b>                                | <b>N</b>   |
|                   | <b>Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?</b> | <b>N/A</b> |

**Location**

This application relates to no.23 Alkrington Hall Road South, a two-storey, semi-detached dwelling situated on an estate of post war dwellings. Properties on the street have been variously altered in their appearance. The application dwelling is northeast facing towards the highway towards the junction with Parkside and adjoins to no.21 Alkrington Hall Road South to the southeast. The property benefits from a reasonably large rear garden that drops off significantly to the southwest, backing onto the Alkrington Woods Local Nature Reserve with the Alkrington Woods and Rhodes Lodges Site of Biological Importance also abutting the side boundary of the site. The building line on Alkrington Hall Road South is broken to the northwest of the application dwelling by a 50m wooded stretch that provides the main public access from the residential area to the woods.

**Description of Proposal**

Permission is sought for a two storey rear extension at basement and ground floor level, and single storey side extension which projects from the northwest facing side elevation. The extension would wraparound the host property and be characterised

by a hipped roof with two roof lights to the rear. The proposals would be constructed from facing brick, concrete roof tiles and uPVC fenestration.

### **Relevant History**

#### **19/01461/FUL**

Single storey side extension including side dormers and two storey rear extension at basement and ground floor level with balcony at first floor – **Refuse** for following reasons:

1. The proposed extensions are considered to be of a poor standard of design through the inclusion of two, side-facing dormer windows and mismatched height to eaves between the rear and side extensions. These features would appear as irregular additions at a prominent siting within the street scene and would result in significant visual harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene. The harm to the character and appearance of the street scene would be compounded as the proposed side extension would result in the loss of the mature sycamore tree adjacent to the western boundary in the short-medium term, which would significantly harm the sylvan character of the surrounding area. Furthermore, as a result of the overall scale and rectilinear form, the proposed rear extension would introduce an incongruous form that would be unduly harmful to the character and appearance of the application dwelling, the adjoining semi and the surrounding area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies DM1, P2 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the Council's 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' Supplementary Planning Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed development would seek to extend over the root system of the adjacent mature sycamore tree (identified as T2 in the submitted Tree Survey Report by Rainfords Tree Care, dated 14/5/2021) which is part of the Alkrington Woods and Rhodes Lodge Site of Biological Importance and would result in the likely death of the tree in the short to medium term. Such loss would be detrimental to the wider ecological value of the SBI and is not justified, mitigated or outweighed by other considerations within the application. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy G7 of the adopted Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. By virtue of its siting, size and design, and the proposed rear balcony, the proposal would harm the amenity of the occupiers of no.21 Alkrington Hall Road South due to a loss of light, overlooking, and overbearing impact to the rear facing habitable room windows and outdoor amenity space. As such, the proposed development is contrary to policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the Council's 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' Supplementary Planning Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **Township/Member comments**

N/A

## **Consultee responses**

Tree Officer

*No comments received to date. Comments received under previous application deemed applicable:*

The site is immediately adjacent to Alkrington Woods Site of Biological Importance and Local Nature Reserve.

I have concerns that the planned extension to the north elevation of the house will cause significant and unacceptable harm to a mature Sycamore tree which is a short distance from the boundary, within the SBI/LNR. The tree is marked as T2 in the tree survey supplied to inform the application, and is described as a category B tree, in reasonable health and with a relatively long projected lifespan.

The AIA report indicates that the encroachment into the Root Protection Area (RPA) of this tree will be only 8.2m<sup>2</sup>. I disagree with this assessment. Although the driveway of the house is modified ground it is not completely sealed, and tree roots of T2 will extend under the drive. I would regard the RPA as including all of the current driveway, not just the area of land immediately adjacent to the boundary. The construction of the extension will cause direct severance of tree roots to construct the foundations of the extension, and will further harm any roots which are retained by creating a fully sealed surface.

This root loss may cause the loss of the tree in the short-to-medium term, or could weaken and unbalance the tree, making it unstable and therefore a danger to life and property. The potential loss of a mature broadleaved tree would also cause harm to the special interest of the SBI/LNR.

There is however a need for the tree to be pruned (crown reduction) to prevent branches further encroaching over the property.

## **Representations**

Letters of notification were sent to all surrounding properties and one letter of objection was received.

The letter raised concern over the scale of development. This is assessed in the 'Design' and 'Amenity' sections of the report. Other concerns raised in the letter relate to the effect of the development on the structural integrity of a neighbouring property, the delivery of goods over the fence from Alkrington Woods, the removal of the boundary fence, damage to vegetation during construction and bonfires being held to clear the site. These matters do not form material planning considerations.

## **Policy**

### **National**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2023  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

### **Sub-Regional**

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

|              |                              |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| <b>JP-P1</b> | Sustainable Places           |
| <b>JP-G2</b> | Green Infrastructure Network |
| <b>JP-G7</b> | Trees and Woodland           |

## **Local**

### Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

|              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| <b>G/D/1</b> | Defined Urban Area |
|--------------|--------------------|

### Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

The Rochdale Core Strategy was adopted on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The following policies are relevant:

|                   |                                                      |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>P3</b>         | Improving Design of New Development                  |
| <b>G6</b>         | Enhancing Green Infrastructure                       |
| <b>G7</b>         | Enhancing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity |
| <b>DM1</b>        | General Development Requirements                     |
| <b>T2</b>         | Improving Accessibility                              |
| <b>Appendix 5</b> | Schedule of Parking Standards                        |

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD): Supplementary Planning Document 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (2016).

## **Amendments**

N/A

## **Assessment**

### **Impact on Character and Appearance**

Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design. Policy P2 of the Core Strategy seeks to enhance character and landscape by requiring new development to integrate successfully with the key natural features of the Borough.

Following the refusal of the previous application (ref: 19/01461/FUL), the design of the proposed extension has been simplified and a number of elements have been removed. Whilst the overall footprint remains the same, the massing of the extension has been reduced and it now appears more in-keeping with the host property.

The site adjoins the Alkrington Woods Local Nature Reserve and the Alkrington Woods and Rhodes Lodge Site of Biological Importance; a corridor of mature woodland which broadly follows the course of Boardman Brook, extending from Manchester New Road in the southeast. The mature trees which comprise this area are visible between dwellings on the southern side of Alkrington Hall Road South and make a positive contribution to the street scene. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF acknowledges that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The side extension has the potential to impact upon trees within the SBI, including tree roots and canopies in closest proximity. Under the previous application, which proposed an extension of an identical footprint, the Council's Arboricultural Consultant noted that an adjacent mature sycamore would be significantly impacted by the construction of foundations over the roots of the trees, likely resulting in the death of the tree in the short to medium term. Given the positive contribution that this tree provides to the overall sylvan character and appearance of the surrounding area, and its wider group value in respect of the Alkrington Woods and Rhodes Lodge SBI, retention of this tree is necessary. Whilst compensatory planting could achieve some mitigation, such planting would take in excess of 30 years to achieve a similar contribution to that which the existing tree provides and would therefore still result in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

In light of the above, the proposed extension, by virtue the likely loss of the sycamore tree within the SBI, would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to policies P2 and P3 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.

### **Amenity**

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should always seek to secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Further to the above are the considerations of the Councils Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' which states that new developments *"should be carefully designed to protect the amenity of the occupants of adjoining properties."*

Section 5 of the SPD provides guidance for house extensions. In relation to rear extensions, section 5.5 states that it is important that single storey extensions are not overbearing and do not result in undue loss of light or privacy for neighbouring occupiers. Section 5.6 sets out that the maximum projection for single storey rear extensions to attached properties as *"A point 3 metres along the common boundary measured from the rear elevation of the adjoining or adjacent dwelling."* Section 5.7 states that *"If the new extension is set away from the boundary, the projection can be increased by the amount equal to the extra distance from the side boundary providing the extension does not project beyond a 45 degree line measured from the point along the common boundary."*

The proposed rear extension would project 3.3m along the common boundary shared with the adjoining property, no.21, at both ground floor and first floor level. Whilst it is acknowledged that the physical form of the proposed extension is two-storey, for the purposes of this assessment the projection limits of section 5.6 are to be applied as it is not considered that the lower-ground floor level at no.21 comprises habitable accommodation through the absence of any externally facing windows and only an external door.

The extension would be set in from the common boundary with no.21 by approx. 0.24m, resulting in an exceedance of the limits of section 5.6 by approximately 0.06m. Whilst this was considered a reason for refusal under the previous application, it should be noted that the extension proposed under the previous application had a height to eaves of 5.730m with a 1.7m privacy screen above, resulting in an effective maximum height of 7.43m against the common boundary.

The extension proposed under the current application would have a height to eaves of 5m with a pitched roof above which would have a maximum height of 6.28m. Given the reduction in overall height, the marginal exceedance of 0.06m and the location of the extension to the north of no.21, it is not considered that the proposal would harm the residential amenity of the existing and future occupiers of no.21 Alkrington Hall Road South, in accordance with the requirements of policy DM1, the SPD and the NPPF.

### **Trees and Ecology**

Paragraph 136 of the NPPF states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity, providing net gains where possible, and contributing to the Government's commitment to halt decline. Core Strategy policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

As aforementioned, the Council's Arboricultural Consultant notes that the proposed extension would impact on an adjacent mature sycamore (identified by T2 in the submitted tree survey) such that it would likely result in the death of the tree in the short to medium term. Whilst this tree falls within the non-statutorily designated Alkrington Woods and Rhodes Lodge SBI, as opposed to the statutorily designated Alkrington Woods LNR to the rear of the property, the mature sycamore tree forms a prominent feature within the street scene of Alkrington Hall Road South, particularly when travelling west from the junction with Manchester New Road, and is a significant contributor to the sylvan character of the area.

Whilst the base of the crown admittedly hangs within close proximity of the dwelling, and would benefit from pruning, the total loss of the tree which is likely to arise as a consequence of the proposed development does not benefit from any justification with arboricultural grounding, and the application is not considered to demonstrate any other benefits which may outweigh the loss of the tree, nor adequately mitigate or compensate for the harm inflicted. The potential loss of this mature broadleaved tree would consequently inflict harm to the special interest of the SBI/LNR.

Whilst compensatory planting at a ratio of 2:1 could be sought in the form of a suitably worded condition, replacement planting could not be sought within the SBI itself, and would be confined to the curtilage of the application dwelling. Given the special contribution that the tree makes in respect of the SBI/LNR, it is not considered that the harm to the character of the area, or the ecological value of the SBI could be off-set sufficiently through compensatory planting.

As such, the proposal would be harmful to the visual and ecological value of the Alkrington Woods and Rhodes Lodges SBI and would fail to accord with policy G7 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **REFUSE for the following reasons:**

1. The proposed side extension would result in the loss of the mature sycamore tree adjacent to the northern boundary in the short-medium term, which

would significantly harm the sylvan character of the surrounding area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies P2 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The proposed development would seek to extend over the root system of the adjacent mature sycamore tree (identified as T2 in the submitted Tree Survey Report by Rainfords Tree Care, dated 14/5/2021) which is part of the Alkrington Woods and Rhodes Lodge Site of Biological Importance and would result in the likely death of the tree in the short to medium term. Such loss would be detrimental to the wider ecological value of the SBI and is not justified, mitigated or outweighed by other considerations within the application. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Article 35 Statement**

The proposal would not improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area nor does it comply with the development plan and therefore does not comprise sustainable development. There were no amendments to the scheme, or conditions which could reasonably have been imposed, which could have made the development acceptable and it was therefore not possible to approve the application.

### **Notes for Applicant:**

In the avoidance of doubt, this decision relates to the following set of plans:

Site Location Plan

01 – Existing Elevations and Site Plan

02 – Existing Floor Plans

03 – Proposed Elevations

04 – Proposed Sub, Ground and First Floor Plan

08 – Existing and Proposed Site Plan

|                         | <b>Date</b> | <b>Officer</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Report Completed</b> | 10/07/2024  | Signed: BM     |
| <b>Authorisation</b>    | 11/07/2024  | Signed: RC     |

Report Author Bob Melling