

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

23/00584/FUL

CASE OFFICER

Majid Mir

DETERMINATION DATE 25.08.2023 EXT OF TIME

Address: Site Adjacent To 51 Blackstone Edge Old Road Blackstone Edge Old Road Littleborough Rochdale OL15 0JJ

Proposal: Erection of one detached dwelling together with associated works including, access, landscaping and renewable energy scheme, following excavation of land - Resubmission of 22/01250/FUL

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	Y

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	Y

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	Y
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	Y

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

SITE

The site is located off Blackstone Edge Old Road with the plot of land currently appearing to be undeveloped grass land. The site slopes downwards from its southeastern corner where it fronts Blackstone Edge Old Road. Access to the site is gained from Blackstone Edge Old Road where there is a gate. There is a dry-stone wall along the southern boundary with Blackstone Edge Old Road. There are also a number of trees scattered around the site.

To the northwest, northeast, southeast, east and west, there are residential properties. The site is located within the Green Belt. The properties to the northeast within Honresfeld Close are located within the Green Belt, whereas the remaining properties surrounding the site are located with the Defined Urban Area.

Number 5 Gatehouse is designated as a grade II listed building, with the adjoining cottages in the terrace (numbers 1, 3, 7 and 9 Gatehouse) being designated as non-designated heritage assets. The cottages are located to the southeast of the site.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks to construct a single detached dwelling. The application also proposes to create an access to the site from Blackstone Edge Old Road, landscape the site and install solar panels and an air source heat pump and heat recovery system.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**National Guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone DPD (PfE)

JP-S1	Sustainable Development
JP-S2	Carbon and Energy
JP-S4	Flood Risk and the Water Environment
JP-H1	Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development
JP-H3	Type, Size and Design of New Housing
JP-H4	Density of New Housing
JP-G1	Landscape Character
JP-G7	Trees and Woodland
JP-G8	A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
JP-G9	The Green Belt
JP-P1	Sustainable Places
JP-P2	Heritage
JP-C7	Transport Requirements of New Development

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):**SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities**

- C1 Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places
- C3 Delivering the right type of housing
- C6 Improving health and well being

SO3 Improving Design, image and quality of place

- P1 Improving image
- P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a greener environment

- G1 Tackling and adapting to climate change
- G2 Energy and new development
- G6 Enhancing green infrastructure
- G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
- G8 Managing water resources and flood risk
- G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

- T2 Improving accessibility
- DM1 General Development Requirements
- SD1 Delivering sustainable development

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

EM/7 Development and Flood Risk

EM/8 Protection of Surface and Ground Water

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (June 2016).

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 23/00030/CPE | Application for a certificate of lawfulness (Existing) relating to the lawful commencement of development under planning permission 13/01214/FUL.
Decision: Grant Unconditionally. |
| 22/01250/FUL | Erection of detached dwelling including associated access and landscaping.
Application withdrawn. |
| 13/01214/FUL | Erection of one detached dwelling.
Decision: Grant subject to conditions. |
| 17/01361/DOC | Submission of details to comply with conditions 3 and 6 to 15 of planning permission 13/01214/FUL. |

Request Completed.

77/D05308

Retention Of 2 Metre Ranch Fence 1 Metre from Boundary.
Decision: Refuse.

77/D04752

Outline Application One Detached Dwelling.
Decision: Refuse.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Conservation And Design

No objection.

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No comments received to date.

Environmental Control (Landfill Gas)

Requires a Phase I Report (Preliminary Risk Assessment).

Gtr Manchester Ecology Unit & Tree Officer

Summary: The developer's ecological consultant identified no significant ecological issues. Issues relating to bats, nesting bird, other wildlife and biodiversity enhancement measures can be resolved via condition and or informative.

Following amendments:

The amended plans do not materially change the ecological issues associated with this site. Whilst the landscape proposals have been changed, they still include significant areas of habitat creation. As long as the majority of the proposed planting is native and in keeping with the local landscape, the final planting schedule can be provided via condition.

Whilst the ecological report is becoming dated, I am satisfied given the habitats present that no update is required and that it would be unreasonable to condition updates prior to development

GM Fire Service

No comments received to date.

Highways And Engineering

No objection to the proposal.

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage

No comments received to date.

Rights Of Way Officer

No comments received to date.

United Utilities

we can confirm that whilst the proposals are acceptable in principle, there is insufficient information on the detail of the drainage design.

Should planning permission be granted we request the following condition is attached to any subsequent Decision Notice:

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to neighbouring properties; a site notice was placed in the vicinity of the site and press notices were released. Four objections were received during the first round of consultations and four objections were received on the second round of consultations. The responses have been summarised below:

Principle of development

- ☐ Development contradicts Green Belt policy.
- ☐ Contradicts LPA guidelines as has recently been shown with the refusal of planning to the farm shop and cafe on Hollingworth Road.
- ☐ Planning was granted on green belt land for an ecological house; any changes should be rejected by the council.
- ☐ Design does not reach the high bar needed to justify development in the greenbelt.
- ☐ No need for a house of the size proposed.
- ☐ Compliance with Unitary Development Plan

Officer comment: Where applicable, discussed in the 'principle of development' section of the report. In regard to reference to other applications, each application is assessed on its merit. Where material planning considerations are relevant, they will be taken into consideration and are discussed below.

Design

- ☐ Design is different from previously approved scheme.
- ☐ Property more prominent than previously approved scheme.
- ☐ Out of character of rural environment.
- ☐ Design of previously approved scheme was more sensitive to the landscape.
- ☐ The field provides an important visual break and contributes to the unique charm of the area. Building on this land would erode the rural setting and set a concerning precedent for further encroachment into greenfield sites.

Officer comments: Where relevant, discussed in the 'design and heritage' section of the report.

Neighbour Amenity

- ☐ Noise and disturbance.
- ☐ Overlooking,

Officer comment: Discussed in the 'amenity' section of the report.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- ☐ Disturbance to nesting birds, local species and habitats.
- ☐ Ecological impact.
- ☐ Effort that has been made to remove as few trees as possible.
- ☐ Little evidence to suggest a proper ecological survey has been conducted to assess this risk.

Officer comment: Discussed in the 'ecology and biodiversity' section of the report.

Highways and Public Rights of Way

- ☐ Impact on footpath between Halifax Road and Blackstone Edge Old Road.
- ☐ Disruption to Blackstone Edge Old Road.
- ☐ Creating access on to Blackstone Edge Old Road will create highway safety concerns.

- ❑ Highway unable to accommodate development of proposed size.
Officer comment: Discussed in the 'highways and public rights of way' section of the report.

Drainage

- ❑ Impermeable surfaces through development may increase localised flood risk.
- ❑ Drainage details not included.
Officer comments: Discussed in the 'drainage' section of the report.

Procedural

- ❑ No site notice
- ❑ There were multiple objections to the initial plans, and therefore legally any changes would also have to be posted.
- ❑ Lack of detail / specifics
Officer comments: Sufficient details have been provided to validate the application. Site notices were placed in the vicinity of the site on two separate occasions. The applicant is submitting a new planning application for the construction of one dwelling. The plans have been published to the Public Register in accordance with the requirements of the Development Management Procedure Order and can be viewed at the council offices. Plans are not posted out to neighbouring properties as a part of the notification process.

Other matters

- ❑ The carbon neutrality of the project is a positive.
- ❑ Impact on views.
- ❑ Impact on house values.
- ❑ Land used by farmers.
Officer comments: It is noted that the site is informally used by local farmers to graze on the field. Impact on views and house values are not material planning considerations. Where relevant, discussed in the report below.

ANALYSIS

Principle of development – Green Belt

The application property and the whole of the curtilage is located within the Green Belt.

Policy JP-GP9 of the adopted Places for Everyone DPD (PfE) is relevant to any applications on the site due to it being in the Green Belt. This policy reiterates the purposes that are served by Green Belt designation. This policy should be read alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states 'the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. 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.' Paragraph 153 of the NPPF establishes that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 also states that 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.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF establishes that Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it meets one of the exception criteria identified in the paragraph. The proposed development would not meet any of the exceptions in paragraph 154.

Paragraph 155 of the NPPF identifies a set criteria for the development of homes, commercial and other developments in the Green Belt that should not be regarded as inappropriate. In paragraph 155 of the NPPF, 'Grey Belt' land is identified. Grey Belt is defined as land in the Green Belt which is comprised of previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large, built up areas, (b) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another, or (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns in paragraph 143 of the NPPF. Grey belt land excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 of the NPPF (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

Having regard to the guidance in NPPG to assist the decision maker in determining the various contributions of the site to the purposes outlined above, it is clear that the site does not contribute strongly to any of the relevant purposes and the site can be considered to be classified as Grey Belt land.

However, it is noted that paragraph 155 (b) of the NPPF states that development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed. Footnote 56 states that in the case of applications involving the provision of housing, this would mean the lack of a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, including the relevant buffer where applicable, or where the Housing Delivery Tests was below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years. At present the Council does not fall within this criteria and has a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and the Housing Delivery Test does not fall below 75% in the previous three years. As such the development would not meet the requirements of paragraph 155 of the NPPF and therefore would be considered to be inappropriate development in principle.

In regard to the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. "Openness", for the purpose of Green Belt policy is not formally defined within planning policy or legislation but is taken to mean the absence of built development. The term "openness" comprises a spatial and visual component which should be assessed in considering whether a proposal preserves the openness of the Green Belt. Paragraph 013 (Reference ID: 64-013-20250225) of the Planning Practice Guidance provides further advice on what factors can be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on openness. The guidance makes it clear that when assessing this impact on the openness of the Green Belt, it requires a judgment based on the circumstances of the case.

The site presently has trees planted around the boundary with the site as whole being grass land. The Green Belt continues to the east of the site with the properties to the northwest, west, south and southeast of the site located in the Defined Urban Area. The residential properties to the northeast (Honresfield Close) are located with the Green Belt. The gap between the properties on Honresfield Close and 51 Blackstone Edge Old Road is approximately 50m. The views into the site and out towards to the greenfields of the Green Belt are visible from this part of the site. Longer views of the site are visible from the north, however, these are viewed in the backdrop of the residential development.

Furthermore, it is noted that the proposed development has been sited to the south, in-between two residential properties and the site as well as the proposed dwelling would be encircled by a large number of trees. The northern half of the site would also be retained as grassland.

Overall, the proposed development has been designed to limit the impact on the openness of the Green Belt, with the landscaping scheme playing a pivotal role. The proposal would nevertheless introduce development into a previously undeveloped area, and this would inevitably result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt. However, it is considered that the amount of harm to the Green Belt would be moderate.

Taking into consideration the above, it is considered that the proposed development would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would have a moderate impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

The subsequent sections of the report considers the other material considerations relevant to this application and will identify whether any other harm would arise as a result of the proposal and whether 'very special circumstances' exist so as to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, harm to openness and any other harm.

Design and Heritage

Design and Visual Amenity

Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Core Strategy require development proposals to demonstrate high quality design. Policy JP-H3 of PfE requires development 'to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes' and a key aim of the Plan is to boost the supply of well designed, adaptable new homes with appropriate access to private space.'

Paragraphs 131 of the NPPF states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF goes on to state that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that 'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to developments which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.'

Paragraph 138 of the NPPF states that 'local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development.' The NPPF emphasises a collaborative approach to developing design, and using all tools available to develop

schemes. As noted in paragraph 138, there are number of tools available, including workshops, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks. Paragraph 138 continues by stating that local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels.

The proposal originally was presented to a Places Matter Design Review Panel. Following those comments, the applicant worked collaboratively with the Council's Urban Design team to develop the design further.

The dwelling as proposed would result in a contemporary property that comprises of three interlinked rectangular forms which would appear more akin to two linear forms interlinked. The interlinked linear forms do hint towards the forms and arrangements of historical farmsteads, with the unevenly sized main forms reflecting much of the piecemeal development which is characteristic of such uses nearby.

There two main rectangular forms offset from one another and are linked by a third rectangular form. When viewed from the front, the two main rectangular forms have a roof with a slight gradient angled inwards to the central area of the proposed dwelling. The angles are achieved with a small parapet wall which sits on flat green roofs. The main two rectangular forms will be constructed using the same light coloured materials and will contrast with the central area which connects these two elements.

When travelling along Blackstone Old Edge Road, only a small proportion of the dwelling would appear above the stone wall that runs along the boundary with Blackstone Old Edge Road. From this angle to the south, the proposed dwelling appears as a single storey structure set below ground floor level. The majority of the proposed dwelling will be a single storey structure. However, when viewed from the north, the rear of the proposed dwelling would be visible as the land drops away. The main rectangular form sited to the west would be two storey when viewed from the rear. It would appear as if this element was set into the ground. Additionally, from the rear, the roof form of the western rectangular structure would appear slightly different. It would have a small chimney with the roof form set at a shallow angle downwards towards the chimney similar to a winged roof design (shallow 'v' form). The vast amount of the large glazing is also found towards the rear with two corner windows and floor to ceiling windows running along the width of the rear.

When viewed from the north, the main views from the public vantage points would be from the public right of way. Due the gradient of the land and the public right of way being sunken, as well as neighbouring properties and the trees, views from the public right of way would be limited. Views of the site will only be possible when passing the application site towards the south-western end of the site. From these views, the prominent views would be of the landscaping, with views of the proposed dwelling softened by the proposed tree planting. However, if the trees are later felled, the proposed dwelling along with the proposed solar panels would be visible sat towards the top of the site. However, from these angles it would be viewed in context of the wider residential area and surrounded by modern structures. Additionally, longer views from the north would also be seen in the back drop of the residential setting.

A landscape plan has been provided as a part of the application. The landscape design has taken into consideration the setting and has been integrated into the overall design of the proposed development. The application proposes green roofs on the flat roofs of the dwelling. With time, the green roof will help embed the building into the landscape when viewing the proposed dwelling from Blackstone Old Edge Road. Along with the height level of the proposed dwelling, the siting of the proposed

dwelling away from the highway, the boundary treatment, and landscaping, the visual amenity impact when viewed from Blackstone Old Edge Road will be limited.

Additionally, the application proposes to plant 57 additional native trees, grassland areas including areas with wildflowers and meadow mix, and mixed native hedges. The proposed landscaping would clearly provide a biodiversity enhancement as well as creating a landscape that would integrate with the development and surrounding area, and help assimilate the development in to the site. Overall, the landscape layout provides for an outstanding and a high quality form of landscaping. The details, including planting schedule, can be finalised through a landscaping condition.

An emphasis has been put on the materials to embellish the key design features of the proposed dwelling. The colours, forms, textures and layout of the materials all play a critical role in creating an exceptionally high quality design. They have been selected to compliment or contrast with different elements of the design and to work as one when viewed as a whole. The linear form of the structure has been emphasised by the materials proposed. An example of this is the form of the light grey Wienerberger Roman Grey long format brick that are set horizontally against the Charred timber cladding on the garage and entrance that runs vertically. Overall, the materials play a critical role in the overall quality of the design and are key element of the design. Condition requiring the proposed dwelling to be constructed with materials as proposed on the plans should be included with any approval. Furthermore, in order to achieve the high quality design that is shown in the submission, it is considered that care will be needed over the details in regards to the fenestration. Detailed drawings and samples should be provided by condition.

The application proposes a renewable energy consisting of solar panels to the east of the site and on the roof of the proposed dwelling as well as an air source heat pump and heat recovery system. No details have been provided. Further details of should be provided by condition.

In assessing the proposal against the above policies it is considered that the development would be of a particularly high quality design which is considered outstanding in respect of paragraph 139 of the NPPF. The design has clearly been developed to incorporate features of the local landscape and whilst this would clearly result in new development within the site, the form of this development and the materials of construction would nestle comfortably into the landscape once the landscaping matures. Although there would be views of the development, it would however be seen against the context of the existing residential development, and when in view, the proposed development would be seen as a high quality, contemporary dwelling that would positively contribute to the wider visual amenity of the area.

Impact on Heritage Assets

The application site is located within the vicinity of the Grade II listed building of 5 Gatehouse as well non-designated heritage assets (1, 3, 7 and 9 Gatehouse). The NPPF establishes that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and this is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Additionally, the NPPF states that 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.

When built, the area around the cottages would have been set in a more rural setting. The cottages' rural context remains but has been somewhat eroded by the construction of dwellings along Blackstone Edge Old Road itself. When the heritage assets are viewed in the wider context of the street scene where there are numerous distinct modern dwellings, including numerous set on higher ground, the proposed dwelling would not be out of keeping. Additionally, the proposed dwelling would be a modern structure below the ground level of the highway and set approximately 14.9m further back from the highway.

The Conservation Officer highlighted the committee report for planning permission 13/01214/FUL, noting that the planning officer comments that the proposed dwelling would integrate into the existing topography and would be of a scale appropriate to the setting of no.5. The planning officer concluded that the proposed development would not harm the setting of the adjacent listed building, highlighting its exceptional design quality. The Conservation Officer commented in regards to the initial design, and applicable for the amended design, that the proposed dwelling would be slightly taller than the previously approved scheme, but would still be set down considerably in comparison to the highway and the adjacent listed buildings. Given the position and levels difference, it would not have a materially greater impact than the previously approved scheme on the nearby heritage assets.

As such, it is considered that the proposed dwelling would have a neutral impact on the setting of listed building and significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

Conclusion

Subject to the finer details being managed through appropriately worded conditions, it is considered that the development is an innovative and outstanding design that would positively contribute to and enhance the character of the surrounding built environment. The materials and landscaping of the site complement the overall design and must be seen as playing a key role in creating an outstanding. The proposed development would assist in raising the standard of design generally in the area and provide a highly positive feature within the built environment. Additionally, it is considered the proposed development would have a neutral impact on the setting of the listed building and significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

As such, in this instance, in accordance with paragraph 139 of the NPPF, it is considered that significant weight should be afforded to the quality of the proposed design and this should be weighed in the planning balance when considering the acceptability of the proposal.

Amenity

Policies in the Core Strategy, Places for Everyone DPD and the NPPF seek to ensure that planning decisions should result in places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Although it is expected that most new developments will have some impact on neighbours, it is important to ensure that the impact is not so significant that it results in unacceptable harm. All new developments should avoid causing a significant loss of privacy and/or light for occupiers of new neighbouring dwellings and existing dwellings.

Noise and Disturbance

Given that the proposed development would see the addition of one dwelling on a site surrounded by residential properties, it is considered that there are no undue noise or odour concerns associated with the development. Construction impacts

would be temporary in nature and would not be so significant or unusual to prevent the development of the site.

Neighbour Amenity (Privacy, Overshadowing and Overbearing)

The application site adjoins with Tall Trees (dwelling) to the north-western boundary, the Rafters (dwelling) to the north-western corner of the site, Windy Ridge (dwelling) to the south-western boundary of the site and no. 51 Blackstone Edge Old Road (dwelling) to the south-eastern corner of the site. To the northeast of the site is a public right of way, residential dwellings on the Honresfeld Close and open land. On the opposite side of Blackstone Edge Old Road are residential properties.

Due to the topography of the site, Tall Trees and the Rafters are sited on considerably lower ground. However, the proposed dwelling would be sited on the opposite side of the site and would be between approximately 48.5m and 60m from the shared boundary. Additionally, the application proposes to plant a row of trees at least 40m away from the shared boundary. As such, it is considered that the proposed development would not unduly impact on the amenity of the occupiers of Tall Trees and the Rafters.

To the southeast of the site, no. 51 Blackstone Edge Old Road is sited on higher ground than the proposed dwelling. No. 51 is set close the shared boundary between the two properties. The proposed dwelling has been designed to angle the main views towards the rear, and as such, part of the proposed dwelling would be angled towards the rear of no. 51. The southeast facing elevation of the proposed dwelling would be approximately 22.5m from no. 51. Additionally, the proposed dwelling would be sited approximately 6.6m lower down than no. 51. Furthermore, the application proposes to plant a row of trees between the two properties. This would be primarily to screen views towards the proposed dwelling, but it would also screen views towards no. 51. As such, it is considered that the proposed development would not unduly impact on the amenity of the occupiers of no. 51.

To the southwest, Windy Ridge is sited unconventionally with the front elevation facing towards part of the application site. The side elevation of Windy Ridge faces towards Blackstone Edge Old Road. The boundary wall along Blackstone Old Edge Road is a low-level wall with clear views of both the front and rear gardens visible from the highway. The proposed dwelling and Windy Ridge would be at the same ground floor level. The proposed dwelling would be sited approximately 15m from the shared boundary and 29m from the front elevation of Windy Ridge. This would exceed the minimum standards set out in the SPD. The application would also include external areas around the proposed dwelling. The nearest outside area would be approximately 7m from the shared boundary. However, this would be at ground floor level and not in an elevated position to Windy Ridge. As such, the amenity impact back would be no different from a side garden between two properties. As such, it is considered the proposed development would not unduly impact on the amenity of the occupiers of Windy Ridge.

It is considered that the proposed development is unlikely to unduly impact on the amenity of the occupiers of any of the other neighbouring properties.

Occupier Amenity

Along with not unduly impacting on the amenity of neighbouring properties, developments must not unduly impact on the amenity of occupiers of the proposed dwelling. Policy JP-H3 of the PfE requires that all new dwellings must comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). The NDSS is a technical

standards document produced by the Government to ensure internal space within new dwellings is suitable for application across all tenures.

The application proposes a 5 bedroom dwelling set over 2 floors. The proposed dwelling would have a very generous gross internal floor area of 495 sqm which quite clearly provides a satisfactory internal arrangement. Additionally, all the bedrooms would meet the minimum standards and sufficient storage space is provided.

Furthermore, all habitable rooms would provide an appropriate amount of light and outlook and the proposed dwelling would have a sufficient amount of external amenity space.

Summary

The proposal would not unduly impact on the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties or the application property and therefore is in accordance with policy DM1 of the Core Strategy, policy JP-H3 of the PfE, the SPD and the NPPF.

Trees

There are a multiple number of trees planted around the boundary of the site. A number of these trees are mature trees and add visual amenity and biodiversity value. The vast majority of the trees will be retained. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement (AIA) states that two Ash trees will be removed to allow for the access to the site. Additionally, the AIA has recommended the removal of 6 Ash trees due to Ash Dieback and some pruning of other trees. The landscape plan proposes 57 new and it is clear that there is ample space within the site to replace the trees removed at a ratio of substantially greater than 2:1 required by policy G6 of the Core Strategy.

With the addition of an appropriately worded condition, it is considered that proposal would be acceptable and accord with policies G6 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, PfE and the NPPF.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Adopted Core Strategy policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity. Additionally, PfE policy JP-G8 seeks to deliver a net enhancement of biodiversity through a collective of measures which are broadly aligned with the approach to BNG outlined within the Environment Act (2021). This is reaffirmed in the NPPF which requires developments to contribute to and enhance the natural environment. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF sets out that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should also be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory for minor applications in April 2024. However as the application was submitted prior to BNG becoming mandatory, a BNG assessment was therefore not required. However, this does not negate to the need to meet the biodiversity requirements as set out in policy.

The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). The PEA did not find any significant ecological issues relating to bats, nesting bird or other wildlife.

In regards to bats, the PEA anticipated that there would be no impact on roosting bats. The PEA did however note that the trees along the boundaries will provide potential bat foraging and commuting habitat and that negative impacts from external lighting should be avoided. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) were however satisfied that the risk of one dwelling in terms of illumination is very low and as such no further surveys, measures or information was required.

In regards to badgers, the PEA stated that no evidence of badgers, including latrines, pathways or setts were found on site or within adjacent vegetation. GMEU accepted that although badgers could forage across the site, GMEU were satisfied that the risks are very low for this species. GMEU concluded that no further survey or information is required.

In regards to birds, the PEA recorded four bird species on site (tree sparrow, blackbird, carrion crow, wood pigeon and magpie). The PEA also stated that birds are likely to nest in the trees on the site during spring and summer. This is likely to include species listed on the red and amber list of BoCC, such as the wood pigeon or song thrush. As only a limited number of trees would be removed to allow for the access, GMEU recommended that a precautionary condition in regards site clearance during bird nesting season should be included.

The PEA stated that the site also provides suitable habitat for hedgehog, common toad, nesting birds and common reptiles. The report recommended a number of avoidance measures during the construction process. It is considered appropriate to include a condition requiring these recommendations to be adhered to through the construction process to protect species on site. Furthermore, the PEA recommended that fencing around the site should be raised by approximately 13cm above the ground in places to allow movement of wildlife beneath. This can also be finalised by condition.

Additionally, the PEA also made recommendations including planting trees and hedgerows, wildlife meadows, and bird (including owls) and bat boxes in regards to biodiversity enhancement. GMEU noted that the proposal restricts the loss of low ecological value grassland and two small trees. The proposed development would see an increase of biodiversity enhancement through the landscaping planning which would consist of additional native tree planting, mixed native hedgerows, grassland area and shrub planting. GMEU were satisfied that mitigation is achievable on-site in line with the landscape proposals provided. It is considered that the details of the landscape can be finalised by condition.

With addition of the appropriate conditions it is considered that proposal would be acceptable and accord with policies G7 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, policy JP-G8 of the PfE and NPPF.

Highway and Public Right of Way

Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to improve accessibility by locating development where good access to public transport is available or can be provided and in all circumstances, prioritises the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area. Policy DM1 also states that all development proposals should provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be

prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

The site will be accessed off Blackstone Edge Old Road. The road is a part of the adopted highway. By the access of the site, the highway is sufficiently wide to allow for vehicles to travel in both directions. The highway does narrow to a single lane when travelling further east along Blackstone Edge Old Road.

The highways department raised no objection to the proposal. The highways department concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to produce any noticeable volume of traffic when considered against the existing background traffic and that there were no new road safety concerns as a result of the proposed development.

The highways department considered that the driveway was at a gradient that is not excessive and does not exceed the maximum gradient for a driveway. The highways department did however note that the site access would need to identify a visibility splay of 2.4 x 43m, but this information was not provided. A condition requiring details of the visibility splay can be included with any approval.

In regards to parking on the site, there appears to be adequate off-street parking spaces, including on the drive and in the double garage. The parking provision would exceed the maximum levels set out in appendix 5 of the Core Strategy. Additionally, the highway department have confirmed that there is sufficient turning space within the site.

It is noted that there is a public right of way that runs along north-eastern boundary of the site. The application does not propose to construct the dwelling close the public right of way. The proposed development would not impact on the public right of way.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable and is in accordance with policies T2 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF

Drainage

The site is located within Flood Risk Zone 1 and is not located within Critical Drainage Area or in an area at risk of surface water flood. However, the highway directly adjacent to the site is located within 1 in 30 year risk of national surface water flooding. The site is also located on a gradient with number properties situated at the bottom of the site.

A sustainable drainage strategy was provided, however, there was insufficient information. United Utilities therefore requested the addition of a pre-commencement condition requiring details of the drainage scheme to be provided.

As such, subject to the addition of the condition, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable and accords with the relevant policies in the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Land Contamination

The application is not supported by any documentation which may consider the potential for historic land contamination. The Land Contamination Officer has recommended the addition of condition requiring a preliminary risk assessment to be provided prior to the commencement of any work on site.

As such, subject to the addition of the condition, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable and accords with the relevant policies in the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Energy and Climate Change

PfE policy formally sets out Greater Manchester's ambitious target to be carbon neutral by 2038. It notes that the uplift to Part L of the Building Regulations (Conservation of Fuel and Power) announced in December 2021, is to be precursor to the introduction of the Future Homes Standard (FHS) which is anticipated to take effect in 2025.

Along with meeting current and future building regulations, the application proposes to install solar panels along with an air source heat pump and heat recovery system. Further details of this will be required by condition. The proposed development would align with the considerations of PfE and is therefore acceptable.

Planning Balance, Very Special Circumstances and Conclusions

As outlined above, the application comprises of inappropriate development within the Green Belt, which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Moderate harm has been identified to the openness of the Green Belt. The harm identified on the Green Belt must be afforded significant weight in the overall planning balance.

The site benefits from an extant planning permission for a detached dwelling (13/01214/FUL). A number of pre-commencement conditions were discharged under application 17/01361/DOC. Subsequently application 23/00030/CPE was made and it was concluded that works carried out in relation to planning permission 13/01214/FUL, for the erection of one detached dwelling, were undertaken within the relevant timescale and constituted a material operation. As such, the approved scheme represents a fall-back position and is afforded substantial weight.

When comparing to the fall-back position scheme, the proposed dwelling would be set higher when viewed from Blackstone Edge Old Road. The approved scheme would be partly recessed within the landscape. However, when viewed from the north, the whole of the width of the dwelling would be visible. Although the addition of mounds would reduce the prominence and screen the views from lower ground. In comparison to the proposed dwelling, the dwelling of the approved scheme is slightly wider. The overall footprint of the approved scheme is 1000 sqm when including the court yard. When including the hardstanding areas, this increases to 1400 sqm. In comparison, the footprint of the proposed dwelling would be 431 sqm, and when including the hardstanding, it would increase to 1140 sqm. The footprint of the proposed dwelling would be substantially reduced in comparison to the approved scheme. Additionally, the proposed landscape would help screen the proposed dwelling. In comparison to the approved scheme, the proposed landscaping would substantially increase the level of biodiversity and is generally superior with greater consideration of ecology, biodiversity and the site itself. Overall, it is considered that the impact on the openness would not be too dissimilar to the previously approved scheme.

The applicant has worked with the urban design team to develop a design of high quality and has proposed the use of high quality materials. The design would fit in with the overall form and layout of its surroundings. The design of the proposed development is considered to be outstanding, with landscaping integral to the overall design. The resulting design responds positively to the landscape context and provides significant biodiversity enhancements with the inclusion of native planting,

wild flower meadow and green roofs. Significant weight is afforded to the design of the proposal.

Additionally, the application proposes the inclusion of solar panels, along with air source heat pumps and heat recovery system. This would help support sustainability aims of the NPPF, Core Strategy and PfE. This is given moderate weight.

In providing an outstanding development, the proposal will help raise the standards of design more generally in the Borough, and contribute to The Council's Housing Strategy 2017-2022. The adoption of PfE also reaffirms the Council's commitment to addressing regional inequalities, in part through the delivery of higher-value housing. The proposed development consisting of a very substantially sized 5 bedroom dwelling set within attractive landscape settings would provide a contribution towards this. It is given limited weight due to the scale of the scheme.

The proposal is otherwise compliant with local, regional and national planning policy in respect of the proposals impact on the amenity of neighbours, highway and public safety, heritage, flooding and drainage and land contamination which all weigh neutrally in the overall planning balance.

In conclusion, none of the individual factors alone amount to very special circumstances. However, when added together, it is considered that very special circumstances do exist that outweigh the harm to the green belt through inappropriateness and the harm to openness, and the development is considered to be acceptable in principle.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason. Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents hereby approved:
 - Site Location Plan. Drawing number: 01. Revision: A
 - Proposed Site Plan. Drawing number: 20. Revision: A
 - Plans as Proposed. Drawing number: 21. Revision: A
 - Concept-Form and Materials. Drawing number: 24. Revision: A
 - Concept-Form and Materials. Drawing number: 31. Revision: A. Received by email on 23/05/2025.
 - Proposed Roof Plan. Drawing number: 32. Revision: A. Received by email on 23/05/2025.
 - Cross-section. Drawing number: 23. Revision: A
 - Street View Blackstone Edge Old Road. Drawing number: 30. Revision: A. Received by email on 21/03/2025

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan, the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The development hereby approved shall be constructed in materials contained within the approved drawings 'Concept-Form and Materials'

(Drawing number: 24; Revision: A and Drawing number: 31; Revision: A)
unless first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a scheme of biodiversity enhancements pursuant to that phase of development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such measure shall include, but not limited to, the provision of bird boxes, bird bricks, bat boxes and bat bricks to be integrated to the fabric of the buildings hereby approved, bug hotels, hibernaculum, wildflower seeding and hedgehog habitat (including provision of 'Hedgehog Highways') The duly approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to final occupation of the phase of development to which the measures relate and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of enhancing biodiversity and habitat provision within the site in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. No clearance of trees and shrubs in preparation for (or during the course of) development shall take place during the bird nesting season (March - August inclusive) unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present or provides detailed protection scheme of nesting birds during the period of works on site which has been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to prevent any habitat disturbance to nesting birds in accordance with policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, policy JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. The recommendations made for measures during the construction process as submitted in sections 10.2 to 10.5 of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (prepared by Verity Webster; dated: September 2022) shall be adhered at all times during the construction process unless first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure protected species are appropriately protected from the development and to accord with the requirements of policy G7 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, policy JP-G8 of the Places for Everyone Joint DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. No development (including any demolition, site clearance or preparation works) shall take place until the trees that are to be retained within the site has been enclosed with temporary protective fencing and temporary ground protection has been fully installed in full accordance with BS:5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction' and with the approved Tree Protection Plan (Drawing number 6898.02).

The necessary protection measures shall be retained and the Arboricultural Method Statement in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement (by TBA Landscape Architects; Ref: MG/6898/AIA&AMS/SEP22;

Dated: September 2022) shall be adhered to throughout the construction phase of the development and no works, excavation, tipping, or stacking/storage of materials shall take place beyond such protective fencing during the construction period.

Reason: In order to protect the existing trees on the site in the interests of the amenities of the area and in accordance with Policies P3, G1, G6 and G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-P1, JP-G6 and JP-G7 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), or any equivalent Order following the revocation and re-enactment thereof, the dwelling hereby approved shall not be altered or extended, and no buildings or structure shall be erected within their curtilage under Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes AA, A, B, C, D, E and F of the above Order.

Reason: To prevent undue harm to the amenity of existing and future occupiers and in the interest of visual amenity and in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Notwithstanding any details submitted as part of the application, no part of the development shall be occupied until details of the type, siting, design and materials to be used in the construction of boundaries, screens or retaining walls have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any structures shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the approved development and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and ensure protected species are appropriately protected, and in accordance with Policies P3, G7 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-P1 and JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. No above ground works shall take place until full details and specifications of solar photo-voltaic panels, including large scale drawings at a scale of not less than 1:50, and air source heat pumps and heat recovery system, including details of their siting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-S2 and JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, no above ground work shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscaping works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the formation of any banks, terraces or other earthworks, hard surfaced areas and materials, planting plans, specifications and schedules (including planting size, species and

numbers/densities) and a scheme for the timing / phasing of implementation works.

The landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme for timing / phasing of implementation or within the next planting season following final occupation of the development hereby permitted, whichever is the sooner.

Any trees or shrubs planted or retained in accordance with this condition which are removed, uprooted, destroyed, die or become severely damaged or become seriously diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: To ensure that the site is satisfactorily landscaped having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed development and in accordance with Core Strategy Policies G6 and G7, Policies JP-G6 and JP-G7 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. No above ground works shall take place until full product specifications for the windows, external doors, roof lights, and detailed designs of the window and door reveals, at a scale of not less than 1:50, to be used on the development hereby approved, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The windows and doors shall be installed in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

13. Prior to the commencement of development, details of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage schemes must include:
 - (i) An investigation of the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Practice Guidance (or any subsequent amendment thereof). This investigation shall include evidence of an assessment of ground conditions and the potential for infiltration of surface water in accordance with BRE365;
 - (ii) A restricted rate of discharge of surface water agreed with the local planning authority (if it is agreed that infiltration is discounted by the investigations);
 - (iii) Levels of the proposed drainage systems including proposed ground and finished floor levels in AOD;
 - (iv) Incorporate mitigation measures to manage the risk of sewer surcharge where applicable; and
 - (v) Foul and surface water shall drain on separate systems.

The approved schemes shall also be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement or amendment thereof.

The duly approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of any part of the development, and shall be retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To promote sustainable development, secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution. To prevent an increased risk of flooding as a result of the development and to ensure satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site in accordance with Policy G8 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S4 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: Drainage infrastructure will need to be implemented prior to commencement of above ground works and a scheme therefore needs to be agreed in advance of the same.

14. Prior to commencement of the development a Phase I Report (Preliminary Risk Assessment) must be completed to assess the actual and/or potential contamination risks at the site. The Phase 1 Report must be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and shall include a desk top study, site walk over, conceptual model, basic hazard assessment and recommendation regarding the need or otherwise for further investigation and risk assessment.

Where the Phase 1 Report has identified potential unacceptable risks, a suitable Investigation, risk assessment and remedial action shall be carried out in accordance with details and within a timescale to have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

In the event that contamination is suspected or found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, or contamination is caused, the Local Planning Authority shall be notified immediately and development affected and potentially affected by the contamination must stop. An investigation and/or risk assessment and/or remediation shall be carried out in accordance with an agreed process and within agreed timescales to have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If contamination is not suspected, found or caused during development, this must be confirmed in a completion letter which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment and to ensure the safe development of the site in the interests of the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Rochdale Core Strategy Policies DM1 and G9, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: Further investigation will be necessary prior to commencement of any building or engineering works on site, to ensure there is not a risk of contamination.

15. No above ground works shall take place until a scheme to provide a visibility splay of 2.4 by 43 metres to each side of the access serving the application site on to Blackstone Edge Old Road has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The area of land between the visibility splay line and the highway boundary shall be kept clear of all obstructions in excess of 0.6 metre in height at all times thereafter. The approved scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before first occupation of any dwelling.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety, in accordance with policy T2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Procedure Statement

The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.

Notes for Applicant:

Informative

1. Badgers
The applicant is reminded that under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett. If a badger sett is found on or near the developments site work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to advise on how best to proceed.
2. Bats
Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence to capture, injure or kill a bat, deliberately disturb a bat, or damage or destroy a bat roost. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act.
3. Birds
The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of a wild bird, while the nest is in use or being built. Planning consent does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. If a bird's nest is suspected work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the nest(s).
4. Sprinklers
The Fire and Rescue Services strongly supports the installation of domestic sprinkler systems as a positive measure to protect persons. All developers should positively consider the viability of installing domestic sprinkler systems.

Report Author Majid Mir