

Application Number:	23/00470/HOUS
Location:	Crossfield Barn Gandy Lane Rochdale OL12 6EF
Proposal:	Engineering works to allow the raising up of the land to create level garden area including retaining wall and fencing - Retrospective
Applicant:	Mr Jonathan Jackson
Case Officer:	Hamish Rigg
Recommendation:	Grant subject to conditions

DELEGATION	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	no
	Contrary to previous decision?	no
	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	no

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	no
	Neighbour comments received?	no

CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	yes
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	yes

Location

The application relates to the garden area of Crossfield Barn, a two-storey detached property on Gandy Lane, Rochdale. Crossfield Barn sits within the curtilage of a Grade II listed building – Crossfield Farm and Cottage. However, as the application only refers to earthworks affecting the surrounding land, it is considered that this proposal only affects the setting of a listed building.

The garden area lies to the north of Crossfield Barn and sits atop a raised land bank which overlooks Whitworth road. The site is located at the threshold between the residential suburbs of north Rochdale and open countryside expanding towards the Pennines. Crossfield Farm, Cottage, and Barn are slightly separated from neighbouring properties, however to the south of the farm is a cluster of two-storey detached properties on Hillside Walk. The garden area is visible from Whitworth road which is comprised of York Stone cottages (terraced and detached) which are consistent with Crossfield Barn.

Description of Proposal

The application retrospectively seeks permission for engineering works to the garden area of Crossfield Barn. Land has been raised to create a level garden, involving the erection of a retaining wall along the north-eastern and eastern boundary of the curtilage which overlooks Whitworth Road. Being close in proximity to Whitworth road and raised position above the adjacent land bank, the wall is in a visually prominent location.

The wall spans approx. 30.9m in length, and varies in height; the maximum being approx. 2m and the minimum approx. 0.8m. Concrete breezeblocks have been used in construction and currently comprises the external material. However, the proposal seeks to clad the exposed breezeblocks with York Stone slips. Permission is sought for a 'rough sawn' timber panel fence atop the wall, measuring approx. 1.1m in height. 200mm wide panels would be arranged vertically with 20mm gaps.

The proposed York Stone slips and vertical timber fence will replace the existing horizontal timber cladding and fence.

Relevant History

None

Township/Member comments

None

Consultee responses

Conservation And Design

Received 30/06/2023:

The retrospective planning application has the potential to affect the setting of the Grade II listed Crossfield Farm and Cottage and should therefore be assessed for its potential impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset.

It is thought that the works to the immediate setting of the barn (as associated with the listed structure) result in some less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building, from development within its setting. The boundary wall is prominently visible from aspects of the listed building and is in close proximity to it, therefore directly impacts its setting.

As part of the farm's significance lies in its topography and the development of the land surrounding the listed building in its use as a farm and agricultural site, the earth works and associated boundary treatments and retaining walls have a direct impact.

The changes have resulted in some less than substantial harm to the listed building. Mainly, the timber cladding to the retaining wall and the fencing on top of this is not in keeping with the timber to other boundary treatments visible to the site.

The wall appears to be constructed from breezeblock and then clad in a modern softwood. The horizontal arrangement of softwood boarding is seen at no other boundary treatments to the borders of the site or to the boundary treatments of the listed building.

It is therefore proposed that in order to mitigate this negative impact, the retaining wall should be finished in Yorkstone in order to be in keeping with the dry-stone wall seen outside the listed building. Additionally, the horizontal timber fencing placed on top of the retaining wall should be replaced/changed in favour of a vertical timber fencing, as seen at all other boundary treatments surrounding the property.

The finishing stone to the retaining wall should be chosen to match the appearance of the dry stone walling to the listed building; at the same time, the breezeblocks of the existing retaining wall should be examined for structural integrity, making repairs where necessary. The stone to finish the wall should be submitted to the LPA for approval prior to instatement.

Likewise, full details and specifications of the vertical boundary treatment should be chosen to match the appearance of other boundary treatments seen to the surroundings. These should be submitted to the LPA for approval prior to instatement.

Should these amendments to the works be completed, the proposal will result in a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building.

Received 12/09/2023:

Amendments to the plans to include York Stone slips as the finishing material were considered agreeable by the conservation officer. However, concern was raised again regarding the horizontal timber cladding atop the wall.

Representations

Letters of notification were sent to surrounding properties 22/06/2023. No objections were raised.

Policy

National

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Local

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

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

P2	Protecting and enhancing character, landscape, and heritage
P3	Improving Design of New Development
DM1	General Development Requirements
T2	Improving Accessibility
Appendix 5	Schedule of Parking Standards

Amendments

None Applicable

Assessment

Design: DM1 and P3

Policies P1, P3 and DM3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general. In addition, paragraphs 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 130 goes onto 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 134 states that development that is not well designed should be refused.

Being situated within the curtilage of a Grade II listed building, and due to its visual prominence above the land bank adjacent to Whitworth Road, the proposed wall and fence must be well designed and accord with its surrounding.

In their current state, the wall and fence combine to form an incongruous feature within the landscape. Owing to its scale and elevated setting, the development is visually distracting and draws attention away from the surrounding greenery, stone cottages on Whitworth Road, and further hillside views. However, the existing wall and fence appear particularly alien having been clad and constructed from horizontal timber panels. As mentioned by the conservation officer, "the horizontal arrangement of softwood boarding is seen at no other boundary treatments to the borders of the site or to the boundary treatments of the listed building." Not only is the current design contrary to its surroundings, but it also draws attention to the scale of the wall and fence, thus exacerbating its overbearing appearance.

Therefore, the amended plans, which propose York Stone slips to clad the wall and a vertically arranged timber paneled fence, should alleviate the existing design issues. York Stone is the predominant material used in the construction of Crossfield Farm and Cottage, and is prevalent along Whitworth Road. Furthermore, vertically arranged timber fences are a common boundary treatment within the area, most noticeably lower down the land bank adjacent Whitworth Road. The proposed design is considered more appropriate and modest, and therefore less of a negative distraction. Furthermore, the amendments will help preserve the heritage value of Crossfield Farm and Cottage which is determined by their distinct historical design and material composition.

It should be recognised that despite amendments to design and material palette, the wall and fence will remain a prominent feature along Whitworth Road and obscure views of Crossfield barn. However, the development would not inherently alter the character of the area due to the amendments secured. Therefore, the design of the

proposal is therefore acceptable and accords with policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the SPD and the NPPF.

Heritage: P2

The NPPF states that new developments should make a positive contribution to heritage assets by enhancing their significance, and avoiding any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Local planning authorities (LPAs) should therefore refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. As such, in determining applications, LPAs "require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting." LPAs themselves should then "identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal". In addition, Furthermore, policy P2 of Rochdale's Core Strategy seeks to protect the borough's heritage by conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, including listed buildings and their curtilage.

In accordance with the above, the council's conservation officer was consulted to assess the heritage value of Crossfield Barn and its curtilage. Due to its association with Crossfield Farm and Cottage, a Grade II listed building, the site is considered to hold significant heritage value. Both buildings appear on the 1885 first edition OS maps and bear testament to historical development in the 19th Century, making them important communal assets. As such, the proposed development is considered to 'affect the setting of a listed building', and due to its close proximity, could have significant impact on the enjoyment and appearance of the identified heritage assets.

Nonetheless, from Whitworth Road, where the wall and fence are most visible, the buildings on Crossfield Farm are largely obscured by trees, foliage, and the topography of the land. Therefore, from this perspective, the wall and fence would not be viewed or considered in conjunction with the heritage assets. Regardless, the proposed York Stone slips will ensure that the development compliments rather than competes with the heritage assets. Alternatively, when viewed from Crossfield Farm, the development becomes less prominent. The timber fence is the only exposed feature, and being only 1m tall, does not block views of the surrounding rural landscape which serve as a crucial aspect of the Farm's aesthetic and heritage value. As such, it is concluded that the development would have a neutral impact on the setting, and the significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets and the development therefore complies with the NPPF and policy P2 of the Core Strategy.

Amenity: DM1 and SPD

The Council's adopted Core Strategy policy DM1 states that proposals need to demonstrate that they do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy. Furthermore, policy DM1 of the Core Strategy requires development proposals to demonstrate that they will not have a negative impact upon the amenities of future residents and occupiers. Paragraph 5.1 of the SPD states that extensions 'should be carefully designed to protect the amenity of the occupants of adjoining properties.' Additionally, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

In light of the above, the development is not considered to unduly impact the amenity Crossfield Barn's occupants or neighbours. For residents on Whitworth Road, the proposed wall and fence are only partially visible, thus any overshadowing or

overbearing impact would be negligible. Furthermore, for residents of Crossfield Farm, the proposed fence is not large enough in scale to dominate or overshadow, nor will it significantly reduce views of the surrounding landscape. Therefore, it would not unduly impact on the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties in accordance with policies DM1, the SPD and the NPPF.

Highways and Parking: DM1 and T2, Appendix 5

The development would have no impact on the current parking arrangements at Crossfield Barn, thus retaining the proposed maximum standard of two off-street parking spaces. The proposed parking arrangements are therefore acceptable in accordance with policies T2 and DM1

Other matters

Following a visual assessment of the site by the LPA, concern was raised over the structural integrity of the existing retaining wall. Paragraph 183 of the NPPF requires that “a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability”. As the wall sits above Whitworth Road, it is paramount that the retaining wall is able to support the raised land, in order to prevent harm to pedestrians or vehicles below. The applicant was thus required to provide a structural report from a suitably qualified professional.

‘Engineering Report 9141’ has been produced by Michael Pooler Associates Limited, a civil and structural engineering consultancy. Following a detailed assessment of the site and the existing retaining wall, MPA found “no anecdotal evidence of inadequacy of construction or structural performance”. Furthermore, MPA found “no visual evidence of ground movement or tension cracks to the lower slope, nor any change in profile to the re-laid lawn area of the upper garden”. The development therefore accords with paragraph 183 of the NPPF and is considered structurally suitable for the proposed use.

Recommendation: Grant subject to the following conditions

1. This permission relates to the following plans:
 - PROPOSED GARDEN PLAN AND SECTIONS: ZT23-196-02
 - EXISTING GARDEN PLAN AND SECTIONS: ZT23-196-04
 - PROPOSED SITE PLAN: ZT23-196-01
 - LOCATION PLAN: 12140011v1
 - EXISTING SITE PLAN: ZT23-196-03

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings hereby approved.

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

2. Within 3 months of the date of this decision, the development hereby approved shall be constructed in accordance with the supporting material specification entitled 'Proposals for Materials' (13/11/2023).

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Article 35 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.

	Date	Officer
Report Completed	15/11/2023	Signed: Hamish Rigg
Authorisation	30/11/2023	Signed: Ryan Killeen

Report Author Hamish Rigg