APPLICATION NUMBER: 20/01205/HOUS

Application Number:	20/01205/HOUS
Location:	Higher Moorgate Farm Gristlehurst Lane Heywood OL10 4BJ
Proposal:	Two storey extension to front and single storey extension to rear following demolition of existing single storey front extension including renovation works
Applicant:	Mr and Mrs Steve and Elaine Williams
Case Officer:	Richard Whittaker
Recommendation:	**Refuse**

DELEGATION	**Applicant a Council Member or officer?**	**N**
	Contrary to previous decision?	**N**
	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	**N**

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

CONDITIONS	**Pre-commencement conditions proposed?**	**N**
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	**n/a**

Location

The application relates to Higher Moorgate Farm, a two-storey, semi-detached farmhouse located approximately 1km north of Heywood. The property is located within a rural setting surrounded by agricultural fields. The dwelling itself is a part of a semi-detached duo which form a classic farmhouse style building which is finished with a slate roof and stone walls.

The application site is located within the Green Belt.

Description of Proposal

The application seeks permission for alterations which would include a two-storey extension to the north, and a single-storey extension to the south.

The dwelling has a staggered north facing elevation with the northernmost elevation standing 7.7 metres ahead of the other. The proposed two-storey extension to the north would project 5.7 metres from the existing northernmost elevation (and 12.9 metres from the southernmost north-facing elevation) at a width of 13.1 metres. This extension would reach a maximum height of 6.8 metres and a height to eaves of 4.9 metres. It would also feature a two-storey projection from the existing building which

would project 5.8 metres from the original elevation and an outrigger which would meet the 12.9 metres detailed above.

The proposed single-storey rear extension aspect would project a total of 13.7 metres at a width of 8.5 metres. It would reach a total height of 4.7 metres and a height to eaves of 2.8 metres.

These extensions would be finished with large fenestration with a large glass gable on the northern end extension.

The proposed works would incorporate the stone and slate of the original dwelling.

Relevant History

86/D19943 – Conversion Of One Dwellinghouse Into Two – Approved 05.02.1987

90/D25360 – Private Detached Garage – Approved 02.08.1990

01/D39440 – First Floor Side Extension Incorporating Rear Dormer And Side Balcony And Conservatory Extension To Side Of Dwelling – Approved 11.12.2001

Representations

Letters of notification have been sent to neighbouring properties and a site notice posted close to the site. One letter of support has been received and is set out below.

We are the only adjoining neighbour to Higher Moorgate Farm and support the application to extend and renovate the property suitable to modern family living and to enjoy their home and land.

Consultations

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)

Summary
A small bat roost was identified. A license will be require from Natural England. Other ecological issues relating to amphibians nesting birds and ecological mitigation can be dealt with via condition.

Bats
The building was assessed by a suitably experienced consultancy. Two further surveys were carried out, during one survey one bat was recorded as emerging with one potential other siting. A bat roost has therefore been confirmed. I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. As only one bat was confirmed on one occasion, a common pipistrelle, I am satisfied that the favourable conservation status of this species can be maintained, through appropriate mitigation and that a License will be issued by Natural England

I recommend a condition along the following lines be applied to any permission.

The development is likely to cause harm to common pipistrelle bats and shall not in any circumstances commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either:

a) a license issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55, of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorising the specified activity/development go ahead: or
b) a statement in writing form the relevant licensing body to the effect that it does not consider that the specified development or works will require a license

Amphibians
There is a sizeable pond in the garden a potential amphibian breeding site. The scale and location of the development however is such that even if species such as great crested newts were present, an offence could be avoided through reasonable avoidance measures. I therefore recommend a condition along the following lines be applied to any permission.

Prior to any earthworks a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for amphibians shall be supplied to and agreed in writing by the LPA

Nesting Birds
Trees shown on aerial photographs appear to have already been removed. However as a precaution I recommend an informtive along the following lines be applied to any permission.

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 birds nest is suspected work should cease immediately and a suitably experienced ecologist employed to assess how best to safeguard the nest(s).

Contributing to and Enhancing the Natural Environment
Section 170 of the NPPF 2019 states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The development site appears to currently have negligible to low ecological value. I am satisfied that any soft landscaping is liable to result in net gain. ***The details can be conditioned.***

Policy

National

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Local

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/2 Green Belt

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

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

G4	Protecting Green Belt land
G7	Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity
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

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

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

Amendments

N/A

Assessment

Amenity: DM1, SPD

Given the nature of the location the impact of the proposal (in terms of neighbouring amenity) is limited to that of the attached neighbour.

The proposal features a two storey rear extension to the north which would project 5.7 metres from the existing rearmost (northernmost) elevation. Paragraph 5.9 of the SPD states that two-storey extensions that project beyond a 30 degree line drawn from a point 2.4m along the common boundary from the rear elevation of the adjoining or adjacent dwellings would not normally be granted. In this case the 30 degree line is taken from corner of the existing rearmost elevation which projects 4.2 metres along the rear of the boundary. With this 30 degree line remaining uninterrupted by the proposed extension it is considered that this aspect of the works would impact the attached neighbouring cottage to no greater degree than the existing arrangement.

The proposed south extension aspect would 10.4 metres from the southernmost elevation of the neighbouring property. Whilst there are no parameters set out for front extensions in the SPD which leaves some ambiguity, rear extensions for attached dwellings provide a guide under paragraph 5.6.

The following maximum standard will apply for single storey extensions:

- *For attached properties, a point 3 metres along the common boundary measured from the rear elevation of the adjoining or adjacent dwelling(s);*

With the proposal projecting 10.4 metres from the shared front elevation of the two properties the projection clearly exceeds 3 metres. However, when a 45 degree angle is taken from the shared property boundary at the 3 metre mark as per paragraph 5.7 of the SPD the proposed projection does not breach the 45 degree line. As a result the proposed extension is not considered to unduly impact upon the neighbouring property in terms of loss of natural light or outlook.

With this applied to the proposed works it is considered that there would be no impact in terms of loss of light or neighbouring amenity of any sort and as such the proposals are considered to be in accordance with policies DM1, the SPD and the NPPF.

Highways: Appendix 5

The proposed works would retain sufficient off-road parking to service the dwelling. The proposal would retain sufficient space for bin storage.

It is therefore considered that the proposed works are acceptable in terms of their impact upon the surrounding highway network, in accordance with relevant policy.

Biodiversity: G7

Policy G7 of the Core Strategy aims to ensure that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection

Ecology have responded by stating that the proposed works are acceptable under the impositions of conditions.

Principle of Development – Green Belt and Design: DM1, P3, SPD

The application site is allocated as Green Belt under saved Policy G/D/2 of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006). Policy G/D/2 is therefore relevant to any applications on the site and in the supporting text to this policy it is established that the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in order to maintain the framework of open land separating and surrounding the urban areas of the borough. Core Strategy policy G4 seeks to restrict development within the Green

Belt to the limited types of development which are deemed appropriate by national planning policies unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

Paragraphs 143 and 144 of the NPPF state that, as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, 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.

Therefore, the main consideration in assessing the principle of development is whether the proposed scheme constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt and, if so, whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated which may outweigh the presumption against development.

Paragraph 145 of the NPPF sets out what would be recognised as exceptions to inappropriate development in the green belt.

A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

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

e) limited infilling in villages;

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

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

– not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
– not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

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

The volume calculations submitted indicate that the development would result in a 79.1% increase in total volume. At the point at which the site visit was undertaken the conservatory had been removed leaving the original volume of 714.5 metres cubed that would be subject to the addition of the 565.52 metre cubed extension.

The footprint of the existing dwelling measures at 145.45 square metres with the proposed works bringing the total footprint of the dwelling to 268.367 square metres which would incur an 84.5% increase.

An increase of 79.1% volume and 84.5% footprint is recognised to be disproportionate under the SPD by a significant margin and as such is recognised by paragraph 145 (criterion c) of the NPPF as inappropriate with paragraph 143 stating that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

In light of the above, supplementary documentation has been submitted alongside the application which makes reference to paragraphs 79 and 131 of the NPPF as a justification argument for very special circumstances. This argues the case for the sustainability and design aspects of the proposal.

Whilst the revised planning statement argues otherwise it is acknowledged that paragraph 79 of the NPPF pertains to the development of new dwellings rather than the alteration of existing dwellings and therefore would not apply in this instance.

Paragraph 131 references design and sustainability in general:

In determining applications, great weight should be given to 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.

The principle of the application therefore hinges on whether the proposed works constitute outstanding or innovative design which promote high levels of sustainability which would constitute very special circumstances that would outweigh the harm to the green belt.

As stated in the design statement which is attached to the submission the proposal seeks to incorporate extensions into the existing dwellings which would reflect the organic growth of a traditional Pennines farmhouse which has developed over time to provide for changing requirements. The proposal would incorporate a multitude of roof levels echoing this concept and would be finished with materials that resonate with the existing building. These would be spliced in with modern themes such as large window and door installations.

In achieving these alterations guidance set out in the SPD and the Core Strategy would be exceeded. The height of the proposed north extension aspect would surpass that of the existing dwelling thereby breaching paragraph 5.1 of the SPD as it would not be subservient to the original building. The extension projections would also impact the layout and scale of the original dwelling in a way that would be counterintuitive to the aims of policies DM1 and P3 of the Core Strategy. However, given the context of the building and the associated proposals and their surroundings the proposed alterations would be recognised as good design overall and would accord with policies DM1 and P3 of the Core Strategy.

With regard to paragraph 131 of the NPPF, as has been discussed above, the overall design of the scheme is not considered to detract from the aesthetic value of the existing structure and could be recognised as good design given its context. However, the proposal is not considered to constitute a particularly outstanding or innovative design as required by paragraph 131. In terms of sustainability, whilst it is noted that the proposed alterations would bring modern building aspects to the existing property the extent to which this would improve the sustainability of the dwelling is not clear.

It is noted that the planning statement states that significant extensions and outbuildings could be erected under permitted development, alluding to the idea that the planning authority could retain more control over the development under an application such as this. Whilst the potential fall-back position is acknowledged in theory, this does not constitute very special circumstances that would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

Conclusion

The proposed development constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is harmful by definition and is afforded substantial weight. The proposed design is not considered to be meet the requirements of paragraph 131 and does not therefore amount to very special circumstances that would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

Recommendation: Refuse

1. The proposed extensions would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. The proposal therefore constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. No very special circumstances have been identified that would outweigh the harm, and the proposal therefore fails to accord with policy G4 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the Council's 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' SPD 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.

Informatives

For the avoidance of doubt, the decision relates to the following drawings:-

- Location Plan – Drawing No. 04 Rev A – Dated 16.10.2020
- Proposed Site Layout – Drawing No. 12 Rev A – Dated 16.10.2020
- Proposed Plans – Drawing No. 06 Rev B – Dated 16.10.2020
- Proposed East and North Elevations – Drawing No. 09 Rev C – Dated 16.10.2020
- Proposed West and South Elevations – Drawing No. 10 Rev B – Dated 16.10.2020
- Proposed Full East and North Elevations – Drawing No. 09 Rev A – Dated 23.11.2020
- Proposed Full West and South Elevations – Drawing No. 10 Rev A – Dated 23.11.2020

	Date	**Officer**
Report Completed	08.12.2020	Signed: RW
Authorisation	09.12.2020	Signed: AT

Report Author Richard Whittaker