

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

24/01137/FUL

CASE OFFICER

Anna Hayes

DETERMINATION DATE 27.05.2025 **EXT OF TIME** 27.06.2025

Address: Land at Salley Street, Calderbrook Littleborough OL15 9NG

Proposal: Erection of one new residential dwelling

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	y	Site notice expired?	y
	Neighbour letters expired?	y	Press Notice expired?	n/a

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	y	Contrary to national policy?	y
	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/a
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	n
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	n

RECOMMENDATION	Refuse
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RG

DATE: 26 June 2025

SITE

The application site consists of a small field measuring approximately 0.12 hectares, located within the designated Green Belt. The site is situated to the northwest of Salley Street in the Calderbrook area of Rochdale, just north of Littleborough town centre.

The site is in a relatively exposed and elevated position, bordered by land and buildings associated with Denehurst Farm to the north and east, and by residential terraced houses (nos. 9–19 Salley Street) to the south. Nos 9 -19 Salley Street are locally listed non-designated heritage assets. The site also shares a southern boundary with a wooden-clad structure known as Summit View Cabin and its surrounding land. This cabin is currently the subject of a retrospective planning application (24/00692/FUL), which is pending an appeal following the Local Planning Authority's refusal of permission.

The site is mostly vacant except for three small deteriorating wooden shed structures. During the Officer's site visit, the field was observed being used for horse grazing. To the immediate north and northwest lie the Pennine Bridleway and Mary Town Loop, beyond which are open fields. To the south-east, on the opposite side of Salley Street are open fields leading down into the valley and over Summit in the direction of Snoddle Hill.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the construction of a new 4-bedroom dwelling, including landscaping and a new vehicle access point from Salley Street.

The bespoke home features a curved partially-subterranean structure with three levels: lower subterranean, ground floor, and first floor. The lower ground floor will house a cinema room, while the main living areas—including four bedrooms, kitchen, and dining/sitting spaces—will be located on the ground floor. The first floor will contain a separate lounge area with an outdoor terrace positioned above a front porch. The design also features a circular stone turret to the roof of the structure which doubles as a lightwell to the ground floor level.

The house will be integrated into the landscape, with only the southeast-facing facade visible. A resin-bound circular courtyard, comprising formal gardens and a driveway, will be situated in front of the building, bordered by stone retaining walls. A separate subterranean garage and storage area will be situated near the front of the site, with the natural ground built up and altered around it.

The development also proposes the use of a ground source heat pump and photovoltaic cells to increase the proposed dwellings energy efficiency and overall sustainability.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 2	Achieving sustainable development
Section 5	Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 9	Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11	Making efficient use of land
Section 12	Achieving well-designed places
Section 13	Protecting Green Belt land

- Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Development Plan

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

The development plan for the proposal consists of the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan, Rochdale Core Strategy (CS), adopted 2016, and saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies. The Council also has an adopted series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) (2024)

Sustainable and Resilient Places

- JP-S1 Sustainable Development
- JP-S2 Carbon and Energy
- JP-S3 Heat and Energy Networks
- JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment
- JP-S5 Clean Air
- JP-S6 Resource Efficiency

Places for Homes

- JP-H1 Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development
- JP-H2 Affordability of New Housing
- JP-H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing
- JP-H4 Density of New Housing

Greener Places

- JP-G1 Landscape Character
- JP-G5: Uplands
- JP-G7 Trees and Woodland
- JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- JP-G9 The Green Belt

Places for People

- JP-P1 Sustainable Places
- JP-P2 Heritage

Connected Places

- JP-C1 An Integrated Network
- JP-C2 Digital Connectivity
- JP-C6 Walking and Cycling
- JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

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

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

Managing delivery and monitoring progress

DM1 General Development requirements

SD1 Delivering sustainable development

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

G/D/2 - Green Belt

EM/7 – Development and Flood Risk

EM/8 – Protection of Surface and Ground Water

Other

The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) adopted by Rochdale Borough Council are also relevant:

- Guidelines & Standards for Residential Development SPD, June 2016;
- Biodiversity and Development SPD (January 2008, updated February 2017);
- Design and planning process – good practice guide SPD;
- Residential Design Guide SPD; and,
- Urban Design Guide SPD.

Also, of relevance are:

- National Design Guide (2019) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

No recent relevant site history.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways And Engineering

Confirms no objection to the proposal.

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage

Confirms no objection to the proposal.

Environmental Control (Landfill Gas)

Confirms no objection to the proposal subject to a pre-commencement condition requiring the provision of an investigation and risk assessment to be submitted for approval by the LPA.

United Utilities

Confirms no comments on the application.

Transport For Greater Manchester

Confirms no comments required from a TfGM perspective.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

An updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is required prior to determination. Other pre-commencement conditions recommended including the provision of a method statement detailing Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs); a restriction on construction hours preventing works during the main bird breeding season and provision of biodiversity enhancement measures including bat and bird boxes.

GMP - Design for Security

Confirms that the development should be built to the secured by design standards.

Urban Design

Unsupportive of the proposal. The design, while unique in ambition, falls short in terms of deliverability, architectural cohesion, and contextual sensitivity. The drawing package is underdeveloped. Visual representations are inconsistent. Critical sustainability measures appear to be superficial. The proposal lacks the design quality and clarity required to justify development in the Green Belt and does not meet the expectations set out in local planning policy for high-quality, contextually appropriate development.

Env Health - Noise/Odours

Confirms no objection to the proposal subject to a condition restricting hours of construction.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the application has been advertised by neighbour notification letters and site notice.

7 written objections have been received. The comments have been summarised below:

Amenity:

- Impact and disruption to neighbouring residents and the local rural economy
- Understand the intention to use as a Air BnB style rental, meaning frequent different visitors and late night soirees. The extra noise created by these new visitors will result in disturbed sleep.

Appearance:

- Too big and will look unsightly
- Not in keeping with the properties surrounding it
- the proposed development will detract from the local rural landscape and will overall have a negative impact on the landscape and surrounding area
- The Mary Townley Loop, part of the Pennine Bridle Way, one of the National trails, borders and runs directly to the back of the site and the proposed development will negatively impact the landscape views from this significant trail. The effects to this Nationally important trail has not been adequately assessed in my view.
- Encroachment of/impact to the local Green Belt and the distinct character of the Calderbrook area, including local recreational resources.
- The nearest buildings are unpretentious, traditional cottages and a farmhouse with ancillary buildings that are informal, welcoming and inclusive. In contrast, the design is modern, industrial and castle-like with a 'turret'. It seeks to set itself apart from the community, further removing itself by way of security gates.
- The area is one of natural beauty and any further building work will mar the environment.
- Out of character

- Ridiculous notion of taking influence from the engineering of the nearby Summit Tunnel

Traffic and Highway Safety:

- The application has not adequately assessed the impacts of the construction activities on the local area and the road network, particularly a threat to local rural economy.
- Concerns for additional traffic generation.

Other:

- The development would be wholly inappropriate within the Green Belt turning what is essentially an agricultural small holding into a large residential dwelling
- Irreplaceable loss of biodiversity and threat to functionally-linked habitats within 2.5 km of a protected SPA/SPAC/SSSI (South Pennine Moors)
- Drainage concerns. The site is extremely boggy.

ANALYSIS

Principle

The site falls within the designated Green Belt to which the Government attaches great importance. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies that 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 permanence. Paragraph 143 of the Framework identifies the five purposes of Green Belts.

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF requires that “When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘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 then goes on to list certain specified exemptions. A newly introduced Paragraph 155 of the Framework also provides for development on grey belt land in certain circumstances.

The Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan, at policy JP-G9, states that the beneficial use of the Green Belt will be enhanced where this can be achieved without harm to its openness, permanence or ability to serve its five purposes.

In light of the above, the main factors to consider when evaluating the principle of this development is firstly whether or not the development constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt, or grey belt land. Secondly, if applicable, explore any other harm to the Green Belt, including harm to openness, and whether there is a need to demonstrate very special circumstances to justify outweighing any harm caused to the Green Belt.

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development

This application is for the erection of a new dwelling and ancillary landscaping works. Paragraph 153 of the Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Paragraph 154 of the Framework explains that other than in connection with a closed list of exceptions, the construction of new

buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt. The proposed development would not fulfil any of the exception criteria contained with Framework paragraph 154.

Paragraph 155 of the Framework states the development of homes in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all of the following apply:

- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and
- d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

These are assessed in part below:

155a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan:

Annex 2 to the Framework defines grey belt as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143 of the Framework.

Impact on the five purposes

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

The site itself currently has an appreciable sense of openness, and whilst the site is enclosed by development to the south-west and north-east in a ribbon-style format, the surrounding land to the north-west and south-east retains a largely open character. The proposed development would represent an outward expansion of the built-up area towards the northeast, extending beyond the existing row of terraced dwellings and falling outside the defined urban boundary; however, it would not amount to an extensive, or unrestricted sprawl of a large built-up area. The proposed development would therefore not conflict with this purpose.

- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

The development and application site involved with this application serves no purpose in preventing neighbouring towns merging and as such it would not conflict with this purpose.

- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

The site is characterised by its rural environment comprising elements of traditional terraced cottages/dwellings to the south and east with rural farmsteads to the north. Despite the urbanising features adjacent to the site, the site undoubtedly has a strong distinction with the surrounding countryside. The development would therefore result in encroachment into the countryside and would have a moderate impact on this purpose.

- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

The application site does not abut against an identified historic settlement and does not have a physical or visual relationship to the setting or significance of an historic town. The proposed development would not conflict with this purpose.

Consideration must be given to the impact of the development on the setting of the non-designated heritage assets and the two nearby turrets/ shafts which serve the Summit Tunnel, but this is a more localised impact than one that would result in harm to the relevant purpose of the Green Belt.

- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The application site does not conflict with this purpose as it does not assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The development does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143, and so would not conflict with this criterion.

155.b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed

Footnote 56 of the Framework confirms that in the case of applications involving the provision of housing, means 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.

Rochdale Borough Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and therefore the development does not meet this criterion.

155.c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework

The site is in a weaker location in terms of accessing sustainable modes of transport and residents of Salley Street, which is an adopted highway, are likely to be reliable upon the private car. A public right of way, opposite Salley Street, does lead down the hill directly to Todmorden Road where users can catch the hourly 590 bus to Halifax/ Todmorden North bound and Rochdale Interchange south bound, however this route is on a steep gradient with inconsistent surfacing and connecting to Temple Lane in an area without footpaths. The regular use of this path for sustainable travel by residents is therefore unlikely. The proposal is not considered to be in a particularly sustainable location.

155.d Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below

The proposal for a single dwelling on a site area of just over 1,000 sq. metres would not amount to major development in terms of the definition in Annex 2 to the Framework. Accordingly, the proposed development does not have to meet the "Golden Rules" of Paragraph 155(d).

For the reasons set out above, it can be concluded that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, failing to meet the exception criteria under both paragraphs 154 and 155 of the Framework. Accordingly, any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness, must be considered further and whether the necessary very special circumstances exist. In accordance with paragraph 153 very special circumstances will only exist where the potential harm to the Green Belt

by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other planning considerations.

Effect on openness and permanence

Paragraph 142 of the Framework sets out that 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.

Planning Practice Guidance confirms that assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, where it is relevant to do so, requires a judgement based on the circumstances of the case. By way of example, the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include but are not limited to: openness having both spatial and visual aspects; the duration of the development, and its remendability; and the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

Spatially, the proposal seeks to develop much of the site area, occupying just over half of the available space. Given that the site is currently undeveloped, with the exception of a few small, temporary and dilapidated shed structures, the proposed development would have a significantly greater impact on the perceived openness of the site, by simple increase in the quantum of the development and its footprint. Whilst the subterranean design somewhat limits the extent of tall structures rising above the skyline, the development does involve changes to the natural ground level and the cutting out of a large spherical shape to facilitate the courtyard area, would expose the 5.5m high building fanade and 2.5m turret which would rise prominently above the neighbouring buildings to the south. The site and surroundings also offer very limited natural screening with recent trees to the front of the site being felled, further exposing its position along Salley Street. Views of the site are also clearly visible and uninterrupted from the adjacent public footpath (The Pennine Bridleway).

To conclude, the development is inappropriate development within the Green Belt and therefore, is harmful by definition. The proposal would conflict with one of the five purposes that Green Belts serve through representing encroachment into the countryside. When considered in the context of the current makeup of the site, the introduction of the prominent dwelling, which has quite a significant footprint and requires significant excavation, would lead to an inevitable and considerable loss of Green Belt openness, both spatially and visually.

For the above reasons, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and so conflicts with PfE Policy JP-G8, CS policy G4 and the Framework in so far as these policies set out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Other Harm

As set out in paragraph 153 of the NPPF, there is a need to assess whether any other harm would result from the proposed development.

Heritage

The application site is adjacent to a row of terraced weavers cottages on Salley Street. The cottages are depicted on the first edition OS map dating from 1851 and are identified as non-designated heritage assets.

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Paragraph 212 states 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 the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'.

Paragraph 215 states that 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.

Paragraph 216 states that 'The effect of an application on 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.

PfE Policy JP-H2 states that 'We will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings... Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy'.

The application is supported by a Planning and Heritage Statement (Paul Butler Associates, ref. 19/1313), which considers the following:

- ☐ The potential impact associated with the development of a new building on the two nearby ventilation shafts associated with the Summit railway Tunnel and;
- ☐ The potential impact associated with the development of a new building on the adjacent row of terraced properties at 9-19 Salley Street.

With guidance taken from the English Heritage publication 'Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance' (English Heritage, 2008), the submitted analysis takes into account the following matters: evidential value, historical value, aesthetic value and communal value.

The Summit railway tunnel runs below the Pennine hills, linking Littleborough and Walsden, near Todmorden. The tunnel is just over 1.6 miles long and carries two standard-gauge tracks in a single horseshoe-shaped tube, approximately 24 feet (7.2 m) wide and 22 feet (6.6 m) high. Alignment of the tunnel was achieved by drilling 14 vertical shafts to provide survey points. When the tunnel was complete, two shafts were sealed and the remaining 12 were retained as ventilation. The southern entrance to the tunnel is Grade II listed (List Entry Number: 1162164).

The supporting report concludes that the two nearby shafts have medium evidential value, medium historical value, a low aesthetic value and a low communal value, stating that: 'The two chimney/ventilator shafts in proximity to the application site

evidence the construction and use of the Summit Tunnel and have an evidential and historical association with Summit Tunnel. The structures are functional engineering constructions without embellishment and have limited communal value. They are not associated with a heritage setting. Overall, these features have medium-low heritage value and are likely to have group interest with other similar installations along the line of the tunnel'.

As observed by Officers on site, the two nearby shafts serve as clear markers of the historic Summit Tunnel and its alignment, playing a significant role in the area's broader character. Consequently, for users of the Pennine Bridleway, as well as those viewing from distant vantage points across the valley, the addition of a new turret could create a misleading feature in the landscape, potentially disrupting the perceived alignment of the tunnel from above ground. However, since the new turret is intended to function as a light well for the proposed dwelling and would, especially when viewed up close from Salley Street, clearly fit within a newly created domestic context. It is therefore concluded that the development would have a limited impact on the Summit Tunnel from a heritage context.

Regarding the impact of the development on 9–19 Salley Street, the proposed dwelling would not be reflective of the local vernacular and so would be of stark contrast to the adjacent cottages. The proposed turret would also rise above the roofs of the adjacent buildings and appear obtrusive within the landscape. However, the proposed dwelling would be predominately subterranean and a gap between the application site and the non-designated heritage assets would be retained which would offer some mitigation. Ultimately, limited weight is attributed against the impact of the development on the adjacent non-designated heritage assets owing to its design and appearance which is not reflective of the local vernacular.

Character and appearance

Paragraph 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 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.

Rochdale Core Strategy Policies DM1 and P3 also seek proposals to demonstrate high quality design. Policy P2 also states that the Council will protect and enhance the Borough's character, including the quality of its countryside. New development is required to integrate successfully.

PfE Policy JP-G1 (Landscape Character) requires development to reflect and respond to special qualities and sensitivities of the key landscape characteristics of its location having regard to various features. Policy JP-H3 of PfE also 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.'

The NPPF is clear 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. However, paragraph 139 does also make clear that significant weight should be given to:

- a. development 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
- b. 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.

This application is located within open moorlands and enclosed upland fringes character area as defined by Figure 8.1 of PfE. The existing site undoubtedly has a strong distinction with the surrounding countryside since the site surrounds are verdant in character with open fields to the front and rear; however, this site is not isolated and is very much viewed within the context of other buildings. These other buildings generally comprise of traditional dwellings of primarily stone construction, typical of their rural setting. These dwellings front onto Salley Street creating a defined linear format with strong, well-defined frontages and ridge lines.

The application seeks permission for a new dwelling of a bespoke design which has been shaped around the applicant's desire for the proposal to be considered of "exceptional design quality and be truly outstanding... which sits comfortably and unobtrusively within the Green Belt with its semi-rural setting". The submitted design and access statement confirms that the design brief set out to achieve a unique building which is free flowing in its layout with heavy emphasis on energy efficiency and sustainability.

In consultation with the Council's Urban Design Officer, the following analysis is made:

Design Strategy and Realisation

The proposal introduces a curved building design that would significantly depart from the local architectural vernacular, which typically favours rectilinear forms and materials such as local stone. The designer justifies this choice by asserting that a rectangular or square form would not support the design objectives, however since this has not been tested or presented to the LPA, it cannot be dismissed. The curved form of the dwelling would conflict with the existing buildings in the vicinity and introduce a form and layout that differs significantly from the surrounding built context and so would appear incongruous within its setting.

During the Officer's site visit it also became clear that the actual topography and appearance of the land appeared to differ from what has been depicted on the proposed plans and CGI images which fail to show the true context of the building adjacent to the Denehurst Farm buildings and adjacent Summit Cabin. Amended plans were requested but were not forthcoming. It is also difficult to ascertain how the proposed green roof will blend seamlessly with the surrounding natural landscape and its maintenance from the submitted plans. As a result, there is concern that the final outcome may dilute considerably from what has been illustrated, potentially resulting in visual and ecological harm to the Green Belt and the character of the area.

Sustainability

The submission references sustainability measures such as ground source heat pumps and photovoltaic panels; however, the submission lacks the necessary detail to understand how these are integrated into the design. As presented, these measures appear to be listed without clear evidence of meaningful integration, which raises concerns about whether sustainability has been fully considered as a core

aspect of the proposal. The supporting information also fails to make any reference to PfE policies on sustainability or the standards sought in regards to net zero carbon. Whilst measures are clearly intended to be incorporated, the overall performance of the property in sustainability terms is not adequately quantified. Given the failure to sufficiently demonstrate how PfE policy is met, the sustainability of the development can be given no positive weight towards demonstrating very special circumstances.

Chimney Shaft Reference

The proposal's reference to the ventilation chimneys of the Summit Tunnel is unconvincing. The original structures (non-designated heritage assets) are defined by their collective alignment, materiality, scale, and engineering presence. In contrast, the reinterpretation through a minor rooftop feature could be perceived as forced and from long-ranging views, the turret would likely visually detract from the actual alignment of the Summit Tunnel, preventing them to be read in their original form. Rather than strengthening the design, it weakens its architectural narrative. Similarly, the inclusion of a partial stone wall on the roof is quite random. It does not convincingly reflect the natural landscape and may be perceived as a disjointed or contrived element.

Porch Design

The entrance area, particularly the porch, is one of the weakest architectural elements of the scheme. Although render exists within the wider context, it is generally associated with poorer examples of development. The porch also appears disjointed in form and does not contribute positively to the overall composition of the building.

Entrance Gate and Boundary Treatment

The centrally positioned, set-back electric gate departs from the typical boundary treatments along Salley Street and appears inconsistent with its setting. Furthermore, the dry stone wall boundary abruptly terminates rather than continuing along the full frontage of the site. This lack of continuity represents a missed opportunity to tie the scheme more firmly to its context and appears as a weak design resolution.

Front Garden and Street Level Visibility

The proposed earthworks to accommodate the proposed dwelling are significant and would result in excessive alterations to the site. In order to create the proposed garage and storeroom, the ground level towards the front of the plot would be significantly heightened creating a dominant bank of earth which would unsympathetically alter the natural and gentle gradient of the land. In its finished form, the development would create a strong visual imbalance to the topography of the land either side of the site which would be particularly obvious when travelling along Salley Street - unduly emphasising the unnatural alteration to the ground levels. The increased ground levels and proposed entrance gates/boundary treatment would also obscure much of the ground floor from view, creating a poor relationship with the street scene and would fail to provide a complementary active frontage.

Overall, the proposal presents a building design that significantly diverges from the established architectural character of the area, both in form and siting. While innovative or sustainable designs are supported in principle, this is only the case when they respect and respond to the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

In this instance, the development would require substantial excavation, and the overall design is considered out of place within its context. Additionally, the sustainability measures are not fully set out in terms of performance against PfE policy requirements so fail to demonstrate that the baseline policy requirements are met, and certainly not a higher threshold for outstanding design.

For these reasons, it is concluded that the proposal would not amount to good design and would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. There would be conflict with Policies DM1, P2, P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and UDP, Policies JP-S1 and JP-G1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and Chapter 12 of the Framework in this respect, in particular paragraphs 135 and 139 which states that development that is not well designed should be refused.

Accordingly, significant weight against the development is attributed to this factor in the planning balance.

Living Conditions

Paragraph 135 seeks to ensure that planning decisions create places which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy seek to ensure that new development is compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents / users, also requiring that development does not have impacts that lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution. Additionally, policy DM1 of the Core Strategy requires that proposals should not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy. The Council's Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD refers to Space Standards at Section 4.1.

Existing Residential Amenities

The nearest residential uses are those at Denehurst Farm, opposite, which lies some 30m in distance away and those at 9 – 19 Salley Street which are orientated away from the site. Due to the separation distances, the application raises no issues in regard to the resultant relationship with existing dwellings in respect of light, outlook, or privacy.

Overall, it is found that the impact of a new dwelling on this site would not be unduly harmful to the living conditions of existing neighbouring occupiers, when considering light, outlook and privacy, in accordance with Core Strategy policy DM1.

Residential Environment Created

Section 12 of the NPPF requires new development to create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. The Government's Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard document (THS) sets out the required minimum gross internal floor areas and storage required for new development.

For a 4 bedroom, 5 persons, 3 storey dwelling, a minimum gross internal floor area of 103m² is required with 3.0m² of built in storage. The proposed development exceeds this requirement.

As touched upon in the support statement, all the ground floor rooms gain natural daylight provided from the intimate courtyard into which they face. The lounge is also topped by a cylindrical light well. However, given the confined and sunken nature of the courtyard with up to 3m high retaining walls either side, there is the concern that users of the ground floor habitable spaces would have inadequate access to natural light – particularly given that the building facade is south-east facing, losing direct sunlight throughout the day. The courtyard area is also likely to be subject to overshadowing in the afternoon/early evenings. It is noted that small light wells are placed above some habitable spaces, though omitted in others (Bedroom 1, for example) to provide additional means of access to light. Whilst the bespoke design of the proposal would mean that future residents would understand the particular lighting and outlook of the home, officers consider it to provide less than ideal conditions in areas of the home, reflecting the constrained design approach. These concerns were raised in the early engagement pre-application advice process.

The Council's Environmental Health team have been consulted on the proposal and raise no objections to the development subject to a condition restricting the hours of construction.

Access and Highway Safety

The development is not considered to have an adverse impact on highway safety and would not generate a level of additional traffic which would have a detrimental impact on the safe and efficient operation of the immediate local highway network, or strategic routes. Whilst the objections to the development on traffic/highway safety grounds are acknowledged, the Highways Services department have considered the application and have raised no objections and with regard to CS Policies T1 and T2, Policy JP-C8 of PfE and the NPPF. Therefore, neutral weight is attributed against the development in this regard.

Ecology

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met. This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

PfE Policy JP-G8 also states that through local planning and associated activities a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought where relevant. In particular, development will be expected to achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%.

Policy G7 requires that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection and that opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported. It is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. CS Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) have been consulted on the application.

Being a self-build application, the development is not subject to mandatory BNG. However, biodiversity enhancement measures including the provision of bird/bat boxes are recommended by GMEU.

GMEU have also reviewed the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) authored by Rachel Hacking Ecology in August 2021 and confirm that:

'The PEA report appears to provide robust ecological assessments, and I have no reason to doubt the findings of the report. However, the survey was undertaken in August 2021 and therefore at least 3 years have now passed. In accordance with CIEEM's advice note on the lifespan of ecological reports/surveys, data that is over 3 years old is not considered to still be valid. It is recommended that an updated site visit is undertaken, and a short addendum statement is produced to clarify whether the site conditions and assessments within the PEA are still the same or if there are any changes.'

This information is required prior to determination and has been requested from the applicant; however, no such updated information has been provided.

On this basis, the application fails to provide an up-to-date Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, as required by national and local planning policy. In the absence of this information, the Local Planning Authority is unable to assess the potential impacts of the development on biodiversity, including any impacts on protected species and habitats. As such, the proposal is contrary to the requirements of paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF, PfE Policy JP-G8, Core Strategy Policy G7 and the statutory duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended in 2021) to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Without this information, the application is considered to be incomplete and does not provide sufficient evidence to enable a lawful and informed decision to be made.

Drainage

Policy G8 of the Core Strategy sets out the Council's strategy for managing water resources and flood risk more effectively in the interests of public safety, protecting property and infrastructure and the conservation of the natural environment. Policy EM/7 of the saved UDP states that development will not be permitted in areas identified as flood plains, or other areas where development could contribute to increased flood risk. The NPPF also establishes that inappropriate development in areas at risk at flooding should be avoided and that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

Saved UDP Policy EM/8 (Protection of Surface and Ground Water) sets out that development proposals will be expected to make satisfactory arrangements for the disposal of sewage amongst other things.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have been consulted on the application and commented as follows:

1. This is a minor development with a proposed impermeable footprint of only 380m². The applicant has provided an acceptable drainage strategy / proposal to discharge surface water to a local water course. The applicant has shown consideration of the SuDS hierarchy and the surface water drainage proposals are acceptable in principle subject to site based

assessment of infiltration potential.

2. The foul drainage is proposed to be managed via a package treatment plant. However, UU records indicate there are public foul sewers approx 20m from the site boundary. EA permit guidance is for developments within 30m of a public sewer should connect to the sewer system and therefore this should be reviewed and clarified with the EA and UU.
3. The proposal's design feasibility is based on a 1-in-100-year storm event with a 45% allowance for climate change, which is appropriate for peak rainfall for 1 in 100-year events, and 40% climate allowance for 1 in 30 year events, which is deemed appropriate.

On the basis of the above, the LLFA confirms that the surface water proposals are acceptable in principle but that the foul water proposals should be reviewed to assess the feasibility for connection to the public sewer network.

United Utilities have confirmed that they have no comments to make on the application but provide guidance, specifically that the applicant should consider their drainage plans in accordance with the drainage hierarchy as set out in the NPPF.

Based on their being no objections in relation to the above, neutral weight is attributed against the development in this regard.

Ground Conditions

The Council's Public Protection team have been consulted on the proposal and have reviewed the submitted Phase 1 Report undertaken by TJ Booth Associates. The report recommends some further work in the form of intrusive GI. On this basis, the Public Protection Team have no objection to the development subject to the condition that prior to the commencement of any development, an investigation and risk assessment must be completed to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The findings must be submitted to an approved in writing by the LPA, with remediation works carried out if required. This in order to ensure that any unacceptable risks posed by contamination are appropriately addressed and the site is suitable for its proposed use, in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF.

Very Special Circumstances

A Court of Appeal judgement in Redhill Aerodrome Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government establishes that 'any other harm' in paragraph 153 of the NPPF includes non-Green Belt harm that is to be taken into account in the weighing exercise of the planning balance as to determining whether or not very special circumstances exist which would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by inappropriateness and any other harm. This Court of Appeal judgment is an important reminder that under paragraph 153 of the NPPF, when considering any planning application concerning proposed development in the Green Belt, LPAs should continue to ensure that substantial weight is given to harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. In light of the above assessment, it is necessary to now consider whether there are 'very special circumstances' which clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt (arising from the inappropriate development discussed above) and any other harm resulting from the proposal as set out in paragraph 153 of the NPPF.

The Applicant's Case

The applicant has submitted a Planning / Heritage Statement which, at paragraph 5.5, sets out that the proposed new dwelling represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt and should not be approved except in 'very special circumstances.' However, the applicant has set out the following considerations which they considered to amount to Very Special Circumstances (summarised):

- The site lies in a semi-rural area enclosed by nearby buildings and trees, with limited visibility from key viewpoints. Though the lounge area will be more noticeable, the building's low profile, hillside setting and landscaping will reduce its visual impact and help it blend into the surroundings through creating a recessive appearance, particularly when considering visual impact/openness.
- The proposal relates to a single dwelling which would make efficient use of an underused site and would have a negligible minimal impact on the five purposes that the Green Belt serves.
 - o The statement notes that there are existing dwellings in close proximity to the site which are within the Green Belt including much of the northern part of Calderbrook to the north of Salley Street including St. James' Church. The application site is located within this semi-rural area with existing buildings bookending the site which in some respects is not too dissimilar to an infill site. Development of the application dwelling will not result in the built-up area of Calderbrook spreading uncontrollably into the Green Belt with the site being constrained by the boundaries of Salley Street and Higher Calderbrook Road (the footpath to the north).
 - o The proposal will not result in the towns merging.
 - o The small-scale of the proposal will ensure that there is no encroachment of the countryside.
 - o No impact on setting or special character of historic towns.
 - o The proposals are for a single dwelling, therefore allowing its development will not have an impact upon the capacity to bring forward other housing developments on brownfield sites.
- The statement makes reference to the development being of exceptional quality of design with reference to paragraphs 84 and 131 of the NPPF. In particular, an unobtrusive design providing simple living accommodation, which is respectful of the built and natural qualities of the surrounding area. The evidence of local features being celebrated, including the Summit Tunnel shafts, and use of natural stone is also a consideration.
- The potential environmental benefits of the scheme – energy efficient and renewable energy.
- The landscaping scheme aims to integrate the scheme with the surrounding hillside environs. Swathes of meadow grass will be planted along the slopes of the site, in the same orientation as the contours to complement the topography. In this way the landscaping scheme is treated as an integral part of the development. The planting plan which informs the landscaping scheme will set out how the development will contribute to materially enhancing local biodiversity eg recommending appropriate planting, creating nesting boxes, etc.
- Provision of high value housing.
- Suitability of land for development as evidenced by the submitted Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment

The Council's Assessment

As concluded within the 'Character and appearance' section of this report, paragraph 84 is not considered relevant since the application site is not located within an isolated location. An assessment has been made against paragraph 131 (and 139) and it is concluded that whilst the development offers an innovative design, it would fail to fit in with the overall form and layout of its surroundings and therefore fail to meet this test.

In accordance with PfE Policy JP-S1, JP-S2 and JP-S3, the Council seeks to support the delivery of renewable energy and low carbon energy schemes, however it is found that insufficient information has been submitted with this application to clearly demonstrate how the PV panels and ground source heat pump will be integrated into this scheme without compromising the design and functionality of the development, or to confirm the performance achieved meets the policy requirements in PfE. It is therefore not possible to attribute positive weight to the application in this regard.

Ecology policy G7 of the Core Strategy sets out the Council policy to protect and increase the value of biodiversity and geodiversity and PfE Policy JP-G8 also states that through local planning and associated activities a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought where relevant. As detailed in this report, the application fails to provide an up-to-date Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, as required by national and local planning policy. In the absence of this information, the Local Planning Authority is unable to assess the potential impacts of the development on biodiversity, including any impacts on protected species and habitats. At this stage, any potential biodiversity enhancement measures cannot be afforded positive weight in the planning balance.

It is recognised that the development proposed would bring an additional site forward which is likely to deliver a dwelling which would be likely to achieve Council Tax band E or above, as supported by Core Strategy Policy C3. However, the council has and up-to-date housing supply and through the adoption of PfE has allocated various sites to meet future housing requirements, specifically including larger high value family homes. This is therefore afforded limited weight in the planning balance.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraphs 2 and 231 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state that the policies contained therein are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that decision should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development by approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

NPPF Paragraph 153 states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. '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

Further, the development would conflict with one of the five purposes that Green Belts serve through representing encroachment into the countryside. The development would negatively impact both spatially and visually upon openness. In conclusion, the conflict with purposes, taken together with the impact upon openness and definitional harm by reason of inappropriateness, culminate that very substantial weight should be attached to the harm to the Green Belt as a result of the proposal.

In summary, alongside the very substantial weight that should be attached to the harm to the Green Belt resulting from the development, other matters of harm comprising the character and appearance of the development, the poor residential environment created, and the inability to make a full assessment on the potential impacts of the development on biodiversity, including any impacts on protected species and habitats, should also attract significant weight as well as the limited harm on the setting of the nearby non-designated heritage assets through the design of the building which deviates from local vernacular.

Whilst substantial weight is to be given to any harm to the Green Belt, this matter is set against the overall marginal beneficial contribution of a higher value housing of a bespoke design, with some potential but insufficiently demonstrated environmental and biodiversity improvements.

However, these benefits do not collectively substantially weigh in favour of the development as a whole. It is considered that the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, together with any other harm resulting from the proposal is not clearly outweighed by other considerations and consequently very special circumstances do not exist to support the grant of planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION Planning permission is refused for the following reasons.

1. The proposed development comprises inappropriate development in the Green Belt that is harmful by definition and furthermore, fails to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it through encroachment. Very special circumstances do not exist as the identified harm (by definition and other harm) is not clearly outweighed by other considerations, and the application is therefore contrary to policies PfE Policy JP-G9 (The Green Belt) and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed development would significantly diverge from the established character of the area and would fail to respect and respond to the overall form and layout of its surroundings and its distinctive features. The proposal would not amount to good design and would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. The constrained design would also contribute to poor quality residential accommodation in parts of the home due to a lack of natural light and overshadowing to habitable rooms. The proposal would therefore be in conflict with Policies DM1, P2, P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and UDP, Policies JP-S1 and JP-G1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and Chapter 12 of the Framework in this respect, in particular paragraphs 135 and 139.
3. In the absence of an up-to-date Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, the Local Planning Authority is unable to assess the potential impacts of the development on biodiversity, including any impacts on protected species and habitats. As such, the proposal is contrary to the requirements of paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF, PfE Policy JP-G8, Core Strategy Policy G7 and the statutory duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended in 2021) to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Procedure Statement

The development does not comply with the development plan and therefore does not comprise sustainable development. There were no amendments to the scheme, or

conditions which could reasonably have been imposed, which could have made the development acceptable and it was therefore not possible to approve the application.

Notes for Applicant:

This decision relates to the following plans and documents:

Site Location Plan 1:1250

17.1616.104A Existing Site Sections 4-8

17.1616.103A Existing Site Sections 1-3

17.1616.100A Existing Site Plan

17.1616.106 Proposed Site Sections 4-6

17.1616.105A Proposed Site Section 1-3

17.1616.101A Proposed Site Plan

17.1616.102A Proposed Floor Plans

17.1616.107a Proposed Elevations

Visual Appraisal and Landscape Strategy Dated August 2024

Drainage Strategy Report Dated January 2025

Design And Access Statement 'Planning Application 2024', James Campbell Associates

Planning And Heritage Statement, Paul Butler Associates, 16 October 2024

Geo-Environmental Audit, Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment, TJ Booth Associates

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Dated August 2021