

APPLICATION NUMBER: 25/00034/HOUS

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Location:	32 Stopford Avenue, Littleborough, OL15 8QH
Proposal:	Excavation and construction of new retaining wall to front and side to form vehicular access for parking area with block paving including drop kerb
Applicant:	Mr Richard Harris
Case Officer:	Sam Yuen
DETERMINATION DATE 28.04.2025	EXT OF TIME 01.05.2025
RECOMMENDATION:	Grant subject to conditions

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 no. 32 Stopford Avenue, a two-storey semi-detached dwelling located in Smithy Bridge. The dwelling is located on a corner plot at the junction between Stopford Avenue and Smithy Bridge Road/A58, a high-trafficked classified road connecting Hollingworth Lake and Rochdale. It is adjoined by no. 30 Stopford Avenue to the east, adjacent to no. 27 Smithy Bridge Road to the north-west, and faces the highway to the south. The property is sited on an elevated position to the highway and is bounded by a dry sandstone retaining wall to the south-western perimeter.

Description of Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the excavation of the existing front curtilage of the property and the construction of a 1.4m-high retaining wall which is set back up to

3m from the existing retaining wall and highway boundary. The wall would be constructed from masonry with facing stone reused from the existing wall. The proposal also comprises the creation of a driveway in the intervening space as well as a recessed area for refuse bin storage. The driveway would be constructed in permeable block paving. A dropped kerb is also proposed to cover the pavement around the junction, measuring circa 17m by 5.7m.

The application follows recent proposals for the implementation of double yellow lines and waiting restrictions on the junction of Smithy Bridge Road and Stopford Avenue which will remove on-street parking space in the area immediately surrounding the host property. At the time of writing, a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is due for consultation following approval by the Pennines Township Committee.

Relevant History

14/00786/HOUS - Two storey side extension and front porch - Grant subject to conditions

Township/Member comments

N/A

Consultee responses

Highways and Engineering

Typically Highways resist the introduction of new private access points to roads of this nature unless a vehicle can leave and return to the highway in a forward gear. The layby design does achieve leaving and returning in a forward gear to some extent. In doing so however it is necessary to drop the kerb along the entire frontage and construct a significant retaining structure. The kerb line has a safety function in deflection of vehicles which is lost entirely if the kerb is dropped for this length.

Notwithstanding the safety concerns, in light of the drafting and consultation of the TRO waiting restrictions on Smithy Bridge Road in the vicinity of Stopford Avenue, Highways raise no objections to the proposal.

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage

No comments received at the time of writing.

Representations

Neighbour notifications via letters were sent to surrounding properties. No comments were received.

Policy

National

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

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

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

Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places

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:

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

Design: DM1 and P3

- ☐ The NPPF states achieving good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and decisions should ensure developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character. This is also reflected in Policy JP-P1 of the PfE and Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, which require development to respect local context with regard to siting, size, scale, massing, height and materials.

- ☐ The proposal seeks to construct a new front driveway following the excavation of the existing front garden and the erection of a relocated retaining wall. The building line along Smithy Bridge Road is characterised by established and defined lines of dry stone front boundary walls and shrubbery, the sum of which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the street scene.
- ☐ The proposed works would result in the removal of the existing dry stone wall and hedging and would introduce a break to the established edge. The formation of a driveway would also be at odds with the adjoining street scene where no vehicular access currently exists and would appear as an awkward form of development given its siting at a road junction.
- ☐ Notwithstanding, it is acknowledged the proposed retaining wall would continue to the design of the adjoining wall and would reuse the existing stonework, thereby maintaining a consistent use of built form and material across the street edge.
- ☐ Taking into account of the existing vistas of the application site from the north-west and south-east on Smithy Bridge Road, it is considered that the loss of the established boundary treatments at this particular location would not result in visual amenity impacts which would amount to unacceptable harm.
- ☐ As such, on balance, the design of the proposal is acceptable and accords with Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted CS, the SPD, Policy JP-P1 of the PfE and the NPPF.

Amenity: DM1 and SPD

- ☐ Protection of residential amenity is considered under Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, which states development proposals should ensure they *“do not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy.”*
- ☐ Considering the siting of the surrounding dwellings on an elevated position to the highway, no significant residential amenity impacts have been identified in relation to the construction of the retaining wall.
- ☐ The proposal would not unduly impact on the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy DM1, the SPD and the NPPF.

Highways and Parking: DM1 and T2, Appendix 5

- ☐ Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy requires development proposals to *“provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location.”*
- ☐ The application site is sited at the junction between Stopford Avenue and Smithy Bridge Road but the proposed driveway would primarily front the latter road. Smithy Bridge Road is a high-trafficked classified road and slopes down towards the south-east. The proposed driveway would follow the gradient of the highway and therefore presents a less-than-ideal location for the storing of vehicles. Moreover, in order for vehicles to exit the driveway, it would be

necessary to manoeuvre onto the oncoming traffic on Smithy Bridge Road or conduct a sharp turn onto the Stopford Avenue stop line, resulting in some degree of safety concerns.

- ☐ The proposal would also result in dropped kerbs covering a considerable area of circa 17m by 5.7m, thereby removing the safety function of the kerb in deflecting vehicles.
- ☐ Whilst the introduction of new private access points to roads of this nature is generally discouraged, it is acknowledged the proposed layby design does provide sufficient space for vehicles to leave and return to the highway in a forward gear.
- ☐ Regards have also been had to the recent proposals for the implementation of double yellow lines and waiting restrictions on the junction which would result in the loss of on-street parking space for the host property. With this in mind, it is considered that in the absence of any other viable options for parking arrangements on site, an objection on highway safety grounds cannot be reasonably substantiated in this instance.
- ☐ The proposed driveway would be constructed in permeable block paving. Permeable driveways do not require planning permission and as such, it would not be necessary to condition details.
- ☐ The proposed parking arrangements are therefore acceptable on balance, in accordance with Policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted CS.

Recommendation: Grant subject to the following conditions

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

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

2. The permission relates to the following plans:

- ☐ Location Plan, Existing Site Plan, Elevation and Section Plan – Drawing no. dwg-tjba-harris-32 stopford ave-211024 Rev. 1 received 20/02/2025
- ☐ Proposed Site Plan, Elevations and Section Plan – Drawing no. dwg-tjba-harris-32 stopford ave-211024 Rev. 2 received 20/02/2025

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 adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Article 35 Statement

The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable

development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay.

	Date	Officer
Report Completed	01/05/2025	Signed: SY
Authorisation	01/05/2025	Signed: RK

Report Author Sam Yuen