

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0176
Location: 160 Belfield Road, Rochdale, OL16 2XT
Proposal: Two storey rear extension and alterations to the front elevation fenestration.
Recommendation: Refuse
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE

The application site is a two-storey terraced house set within a run of eight such properties along the southern side of Belfield Road east of Rochdale's Town Centre. The site has a rear access road, beyond which stands a further run of terraced houses on Belfield Old Road. The property has a small rear yard area of 3.9m in depth and spanning the width of the property at 6.4m. The site lies within the defined urban area.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for a two-storey extension to the rear of the property to provide a kitchen/dining room to the ground floor and two bathrooms to the first floor.

The extension would project 3m from the rear elevation of the host dwelling, spanning the width of the property. The extension would be complete with a mono-pitched roof that would slope down from the existing eaves. The resultant rear yard would be 0.8m by 6.4m.

The proposal is to be constructed in materials to match the existing dwelling.

HISTORY

20/01295/HOUS: Two storey rear extension and alteration to fenestration on front elevation

Refused – 26 November 2020

Reasons:

1. By virtue of the reduction in distance between the directly facing rear elevations of the applicant dwelling and properties to the rear, the proposed two-storey rear extension would result in an unacceptable degree of overlooking and loss of privacy to the rear windows and courtyards of No.29 and No.31 Belfield Old

Road, to the detriment of the amenity of the occupiers. This harm would be further compounded through an unacceptable level of overshadowing and overbearing impact on the ground floor rear windows and courtyards of these properties. The application therefore fails to accord with the policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the Council's 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. By virtue of its siting, size and design, the proposed two-storey rear extension would result in an unacceptable standard of residential amenity for the existing and future occupants of the resultant dwelling through the lack of provision of a suitably sized rear garden area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the Council's 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

14/00320/HOUS: Two Storey Rear Extension

Refused – 16 April 2014

Reasons:

1. The proposed extension would result in rear facing windows across the alleyway between principal elevations being separated by only 8.8 metres when the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance requires a distance of 21 metres to be achieved. Whilst it is recognised that the existing distance between the properties is already less than the SPG distance at 11.6 metres, the lowering of this already sub-standard distance would lead to an overbearing impact on the occupiers of the houses on Belfield Old Road and a consequent loss of privacy and amenity. Accordingly, the proposed development is unacceptable as it is contrary to Criterion c) of Policy H/11 of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan UDP Policy H/11 and the guidance of the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development'.
2. The area proposed to be covered by the extension would result in an overdevelopment of the site as it would leave a very small area of the rear yard as amenity space for future residents. The proposal is therefore contrary to criterion d) of Policy H/11 of the adopted Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and the guidance of the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development'.
3. The extension proposed would set an undesirable precedent for similar proposals of an unacceptable scale and footprint which would be cumulatively harmful to the area. The application is therefore contrary to Policies G/BE/1, BE/2 and H/11 of the adopted Rochdale Unitary Development Plan and the guidance of the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development'.

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) 2024:

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Local Guidance

Saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

P3 Improving Design of New Development

DM1 General Development Requirements

T2 Improving Accessibility

Appendix 5 Schedule of Parking Standards

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

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: N/A

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: 17.04.2026

ASSESSMENT

Design, character and appearance

When read collectively, the NPPF, CS policies P3 and DM1 and PfE policy JP-P1 seek to achieve development of high-quality design, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general. Development should function well and add to the overall quality of an area by being visually attractive as a result of

effective architecture, layout and landscaping. SPD paragraph 5.1 also states that extensions should be in keeping with the host property and generally should be subservient to it.

NPPF paragraph 139 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.

The appearance of the extension is considered to be acceptable in visual terms. The use of a pitched roof and matching materials ensures a satisfactory appearance. While the inclusion of a differing roof pitch is considered a poor design choice, it can be considered acceptable by virtue of the siting of the extension at the rear of the dwelling out of the context of Belfield Road, and in an area with generally poor standards of visual amenity.

However, concerns are had with the proposed re-positioning and enlargement of the front door. The existing front door, with its stone lintel, detailed brickwork surround and recessed placement, contributes to the terrace's traditional character and aligns with the fenestration pattern shared between the residential properties along the block. Creating a wider opening in a different position (approximately 60% wider) without the current traditional detailing would disrupt the fenestration pattern across the terrace and undermine the visual harmony of the street scene. According to the National Design Guide, new development should respect existing symmetry and patterns to preserve local character. The property's fenestration plays a key role in maintaining cohesion with the wider terrace and altering this would break the continuity of the façade, fragmenting the appearance of the terrace and eroding its collective identity.

While it is acknowledged that there are two shopfronts along the terraced block which already contribute to a certain degree of fragmentation when compared with the residential properties, the Core Strategy is clear that it is not acceptable to use poor quality development in the vicinity as a reason for lowering design standards in new development. Therefore, the fact that there are two shopfronts in close proximity that already result in a degree of visual harm should not be used as justification to further downgrade the character of the terrace by allowing the formation of an entrance that would sit at odds with the prevailing character and pattern of development.

The removal of the existing front door and its replacement with a larger opening in a different position represents poor design by disrupting the established fenestration pattern and visual harmony of the terrace. This change erodes the building's historic character and undermines the architectural integrity of the wider street scene. The proposed development therefore fails to comply with the requirements of the NPPF in respect of the need for development to be well-designed, PpE policy JP-P1, CS policies DM1 and P3, and the SPD.

Residential amenity

CS policy DM1 requires development proposals to demonstrate that they will not have a negative impact upon the amenities of future residents and occupiers. This is reflected in PpE Policy JP-P1, which requires new development to achieve a high standard of

amenity that addresses, inter alia, issues such as sunlight and shade. The NPPF advises that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Under the previous application (ref: 20/01295/HOUS) which proposed a similar two storey rear extension, reasons for refusal centred on the unacceptable level of separation with the properties to the rear (nos. 29 and 31 Belfield Old Road) and the lack of sufficient outdoor amenity space for existing and future occupants of the application property.

Since the refusal of the previous application, a revised version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 and the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted by the Council in March 2024. Places for Everyone forms part of the Council's Development Plan. However, the underlying policy position has not materially changed since the refusal of application ref: 20/01295/HOUS. Both PfE and the revised NPPF continue to place significant emphasis on the protection of residential amenity, and the aforementioned SPD still forms a material consideration in determining appropriate impacts.

The extension proposed under the current application would be approximately 0.6m greater in depth than the refused extension, meaning it would be closer to the rear elevations of nos. 29 and 31 Belfield Old Road. Moreover, it would also occupy more of the existing outdoor amenity space.

While the roof form would be different, potentially reducing the overall massing, it would still result in a new two storey elevation that sits in close proximity to the rear elevations of nos. 29 and 31. Furthermore, although the upper floor windows would be bathroom windows as opposed to bedroom windows, meaning they could be obscurely glazed, this would not overcome the fact that the extension would have overshadowing and overbearing impacts.

The resultant level of separation (c. 8.8m) would therefore remain in conflict with SPD section 4.1, particularly the requirement for a minimum distance of '*14m between a principal window and any directly facing two storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room.*'

As acknowledged under the previous application, while it is recognised that the relationship between the dwellings is substandard at present with only 11.5m of spacing between the true rear elevations of the properties, reducing this distance further is only going to worsen the existing living conditions, creating an unacceptable overbearing impact.

In addition to the above, the current application would result in a rear yard measuring 5.12m². As considered under the previous refusal, such an outdoor space with its elongated form would be unable to accommodate the reasonable needs of most occupiers of a four-bedroom dwelling. These needs are set out in SPD section 5.4:

It is important that sufficient garden space is retained for purposes of sitting out, drying clothes and for children to play. An amount of garden area should be retained to meet

the reasonable needs of existing and future occupiers. An extension that does not leave sufficient private garden space is unlikely to be acceptable.

As such, it is considered that the proposal would represent an overdevelopment of the plot with insufficient outdoor space.

In light of the above analysis, it is considered that the proposed rear extension would fail to accord with the requirements of PfE policy JP-P1, CS policy DM1, the SPD and the NPPF as it would unduly impact on the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties and the occupants of the application property.

Other matters

The existing single storey rear extension is unauthorised and is not considered to constitute permitted development. For this reason, the submitted plans and description of development have been amended to include the extension within the scope of the current application. If the applicant considers the extension to be lawful, they are advised to submit an application for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC). The burden of proof in respect of an LDC application rests with the applicant, who must provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the lawfulness of the existing development.

PUBLICITY

Letters of notification were sent to all surrounding dwellings, and one letter of objection was received which raised concerns about potential damage to a neighbouring property during construction. This is a civil matter and not a material planning consideration.

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

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.

Human Rights and Public Sector Equality Duty

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report. In particular, Article 6 (1), of the European Convention on Human Rights in relation civil rights and a fair hearing; Article 8 of the ECHR in relation to the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 Protocol 1 of the ECHR in relation to the protection of property have all been taken into account.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Local Planning Authority under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application. In particular due regard has been afforded to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers are satisfied that the application material and Officers' assessment has taken into account these issues.

The application has been considered in accordance with the Rochdale Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policy – Embracing All Voices (2024-2026), which seeks to promote a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion that benefit the community as a whole.

Recommendation: Refuse

Refusal(s) (3)

- 1 By virtue of its poor design, the loss of the existing front doorway and its replacement with a larger opening in a different position would not sit sympathetically with and would disrupt the visual cohesion of the street scene and the patterns of fenestration. In failing to take account of positive characteristics of the surrounding built environment, namely through failing to have regard to the pattern and proportions of fenestration present across the terrace, the development would comprise a harmful and unjustified alteration that would not be well-designed and therefore fails to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, Policies DM1 and P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and Council's 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' SPD.
- 2 By virtue of the reduction in distance between the directly facing rear elevations of the application property and properties to the rear, the proposed two storey rear extension would result in unacceptable overshadowing and overbearing impacts to the rear windows and rear courtyard of no. 29 Belfield Old Road and the rear windows of no. 31 Belfield Old Road, to the detriment of the living conditions of the occupiers. The application therefore fails to comply with Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, Policy DM1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, the Council's 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 By virtue of its siting, size and design, the proposed two-storey rear extension would result in an unacceptable standard of residential amenity for the existing and future occupants of the resultant dwelling through the lack of provision of a suitably sized rear garden area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, Policy DM1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, the Council's 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 1 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.

- 2 For the avoidance of doubt, this decision relates to the following plans:

- Drawing no. 2193. Page 1/2. Existing & Proposed Layout. Amended on 27/03/2026
- Drawing no. 2193. Page 2/2. Proposed Layout. Amended on 27/03/2026