

URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Design Officer	Azhar Kapadi
Date	13.05.26
Application Reference	PL/2026/0190
Address	Former Car Repairs Garage adjacent to Oakwood Cottage, Bamford Road, Heywood, OL10 4AG
Proposal	Conversion of existing repair garage to 3 houses with rear dormer windows, alteration to existing roof and fenestration, new vehicular access with associated car parking, boundary treatments, bin store and landscaping following demolition of existing outbuilding at rear

Reason(s) for Consultation

Building / Urban design

This assessment has been made against:

National Guidance:

- The National Planning Policy Framework
 - The ten characteristics of a well-designed place contained within the National Design Guide
 - National Model Design Code
- Building for a Healthy Life design toolkit (BHL)

Local Policy:

Rochdale Core Strategy policies:

- S03 – To improve design, image and quality of place
 - P1 – Improving Image
 - P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- P3 – Improving design of new development
- DMI (General Development Requirements)

Supplementary Planning Documents:

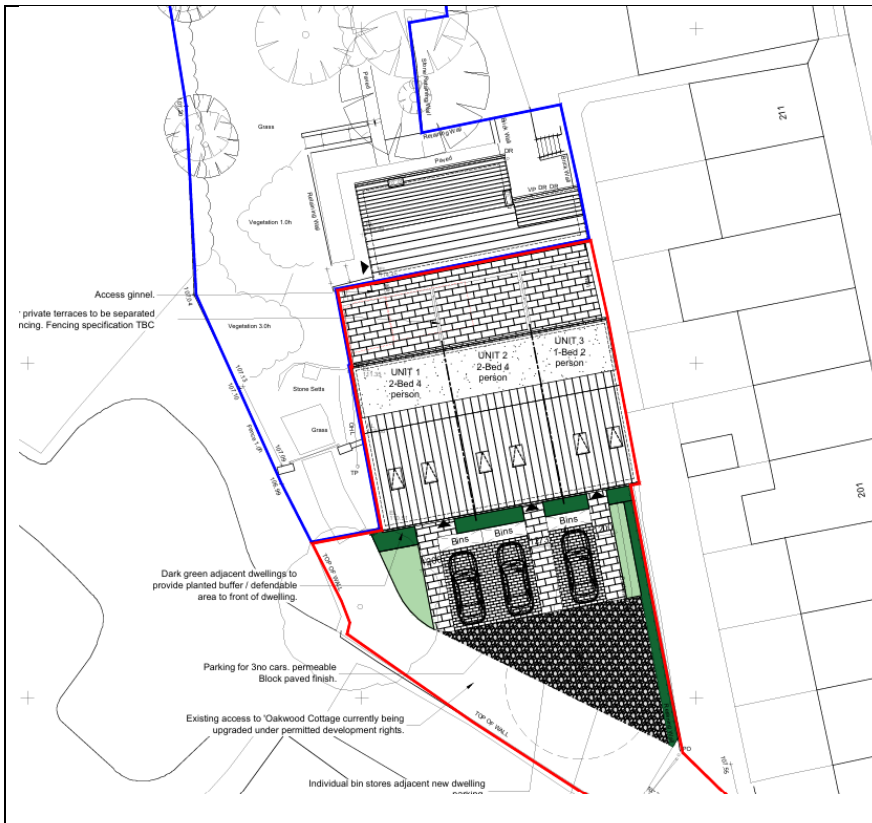
Oldham and Rochdale Urban Design Guide
Oldham and Rochdale Residential Design Guide

The Unitary Development Plan:

- G/BE/1 - Design Quality
- BE/2 - Design Criteria for New Development

Greater Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide
Places for Everyone (PfE) joint development plan

Scheme Image(s)



Source: Application submission

SUMMARY

This is a challenging site to accommodate three dwellings. While there are a number of issues to address, if the case officer considers the principle of development acceptable, I would welcome a further opportunity to review and refine the design and material approach.

Privacy and Amenity

Residents have raised concerns about the structural stability of the dry-stone wall; aside from the structural implications, its retention is important to preserve local character.

Potential changes to outlook from Bamford Road should be assessed. The proposed rear dormer would alter the height and massing, and this may affect daylight and outlook for properties along Bamford Road. Overlooking impacts are also a concern and are not clearly resolved.

The outlook for future occupants is similarly constrained, with rear-facing views dominated by a close brick boundary, potentially falling short of recommended separation distances between habitable room windows.

Parking and Access

Parking and access arrangements appear tight but are shown to be workable. It would be useful to clarify how vehicles accessed the site when previously in use and to consider provision for visitor parking and the implications this may bring.

Design and Layout

The proposal broadly follows the footprint and height of the former garage, which is welcomed. However, the addition of a rear dormer, while typically acceptable, may in this case exacerbate impacts on neighbouring properties as well as demonstrating poor quality design.

The site is heavily constrained, and the introduction of three dwellings represents an overdevelopment. This results in a cramped layout that struggles to accommodate adequate amenity, parking, and landscaping. A single dwelling may be more appropriate and could better address privacy, access, and design concerns, albeit with reduced development capacity.

Architectural Quality

Improvements are needed to achieve a more robust and visually engaging design response. The proposed timber cladding is not supported, as it appears incongruous with the surrounding context and departs from the established red brick character without sufficient justification.

Bins and parking located to the front of the dwellings are also discouraged, as they detract from the overall quality of the streetscene.

Design Policy

The Oldham & Rochdale Urban Design Guide states that ‘poor designs are unacceptable wherever they may be proposed’. This aligns with the NPPF requirement for new development to improve the character and quality of an area. This framework sets an expectation that good quality design will be approved while poor quality will be rejected. Good design should not just be for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: ‘will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;’ The Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan requires developments to demonstrate good design by creating visual interest in areas or buildings lacking character.

Policy P3 of the Core Strategy acknowledges that good design will improve the image and attractiveness of the borough as a place to live, work and visit. This policy requires all new developments to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough’s identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general.