

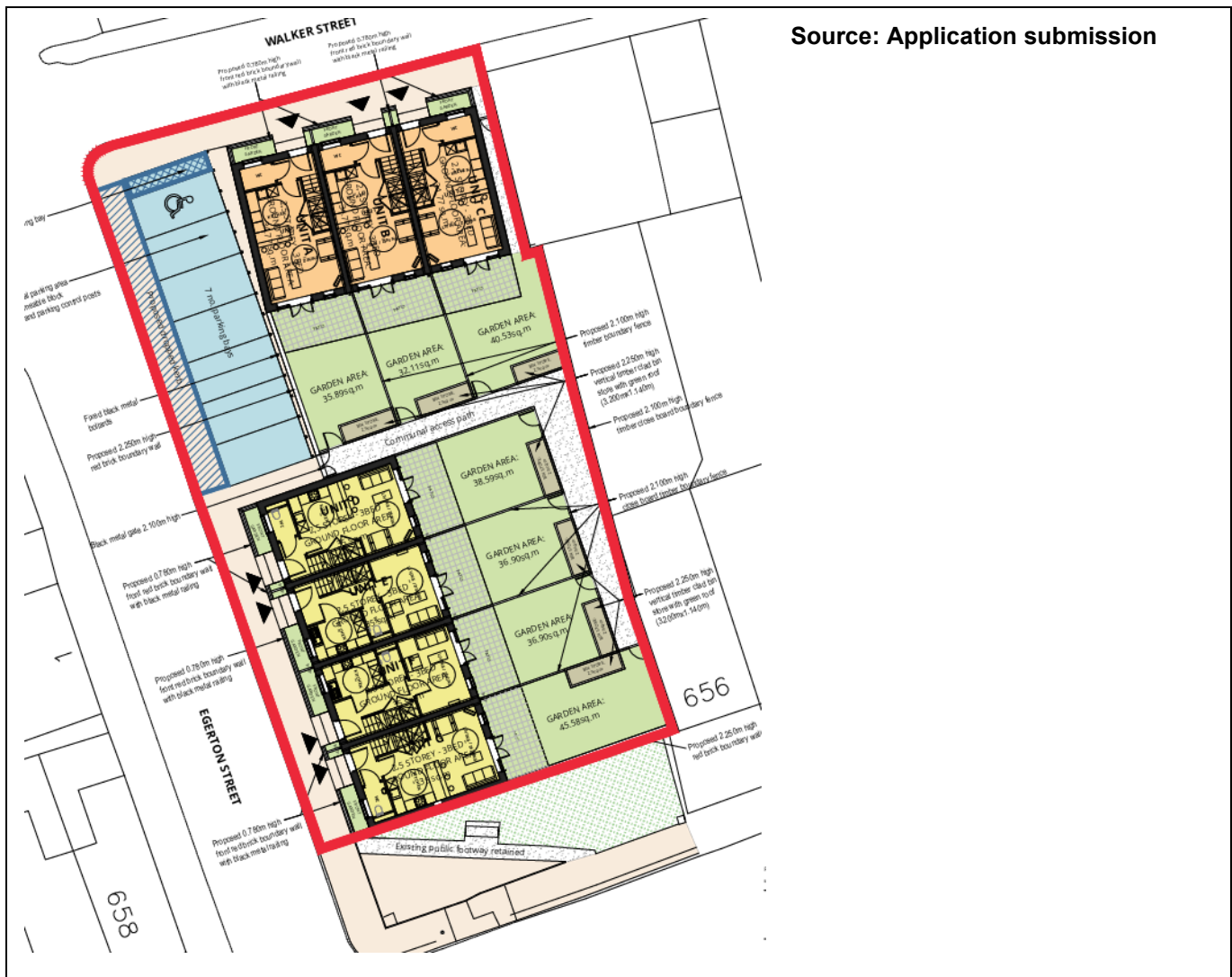
URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Design Officer	Azhar Kapadi
Date	20.05.26
Application Reference	PL/2026/0196
Address	Land at Egerton Street (Former New Jerusalem Church), Middleton, M24 4QD
Proposal	Erection of seven residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated access works including formation of a new dropped kerb, parking, bin storage, landscaping and private amenity space.

Reason(s) for Consultation

Building design and materiality

Scheme Image(s)



Assessment

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

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 (UDP)

- 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

SUMMARY

There is no objection to the site being developed for residential purposes.

The scheme offers a strong opportunity but is currently undermined by the prominence of frontage parking and resulting layout issues. A revised approach would better respond to context, improve street presence, and enhance overall design quality.

Further design refinement is needed before the scheme can be supported.

CONTEXT

A Pre-application process has been undertaken, albeit for a different scheme consisting of 4 houses and EV parking spaces (PREAPP/00058/25):

This application had not been supported by proposed elevations or floor plans. It was advised the proposed dwellings should fit into the surrounding character of the area and follow a similar form to the existing dwellings. The arrangement of the EV car park would result in an expanse of hardstanding would be an irregular and visually harmful feature within the surrounding area. In curtilage car parking is an uncommon feature across nearby terraced dwellings and the applicant was advised to review the arrangement and positioning of houses.

There has also been other applications for this site (24/00573/FUL and 24/000574/ADV) which was received negatively.

POLICY

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.

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.

Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan BE/2:

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate good design by: a) Ensuring that they are compatible with or improve their surroundings by virtue of their scale, density, height, massing, layout, materials, architectural style and detail and means of enclosure b) Creating visual interest in areas or buildings lacking character

DESIGN

The site presents a number of challenges but also offers a clear opportunity. The former New Jerusalem Church was a building of notable architectural interest, and its absence has left a vacant infill site that would benefit from an appropriate built form.

The most immediate design concern is the siting of the car park as currently proposed. It occupies a significant portion of the street frontage and results in an unattractive and inactive corner, which is not supported by design policy.

While the site may initially appear large enough to accommodate seven dwellings, this capacity is significantly constrained once parking provision, access arrangements, and private garden requirements are taken into account. As a result, the current layout appears stretched and leads to compromises in both design quality and the overall street scene.

There are constraints arising from the relationship with surrounding residential properties. I would therefore ask the case officer to ensure these constraints have been fully assessed and addressed before progressing detailed discussions on layout and design. It is likely that these factors will heavily influence the overall site arrangement.



For example, are appropriate separation distances to properties on Walker Street being achieved? Additionally, how does the presence of the side window at 656 Manchester Old Road affect the proposed layout, particularly in terms of overlooking and amenity?

Orientation and Layout

It would have been beneficial to create a stronger frontage along Manchester Old Road, as this would help establish a more coherent and legible street scene. However, this approach would result in long side elevations and extensive boundary treatments along Egerton Street, which is not ideal.

A preferable solution may have been to locate parking to the rear of the site in a courtyard arrangement. This would allow for strong, active frontages to both Walker Street and Manchester Old Road. Achieving this layout would, however, require a reduction in the number of units to enable access to the rear courtyard, and some garden sizes would likely need to be reduced.

In this scenario, high-quality and robust boundary treatments along Egerton Street would need to be carefully considered and justified. While this represents one potential approach to developing the site, it is important to note that relocating parking away from the frontage is likely to result in the loss of one or more units.

Although this may not be ideal for the applicant, it would significantly improve the overall layout and functionality of the site, making it easier to navigate and providing an opportunity to introduce meaningful landscape buffers along the site boundaries.

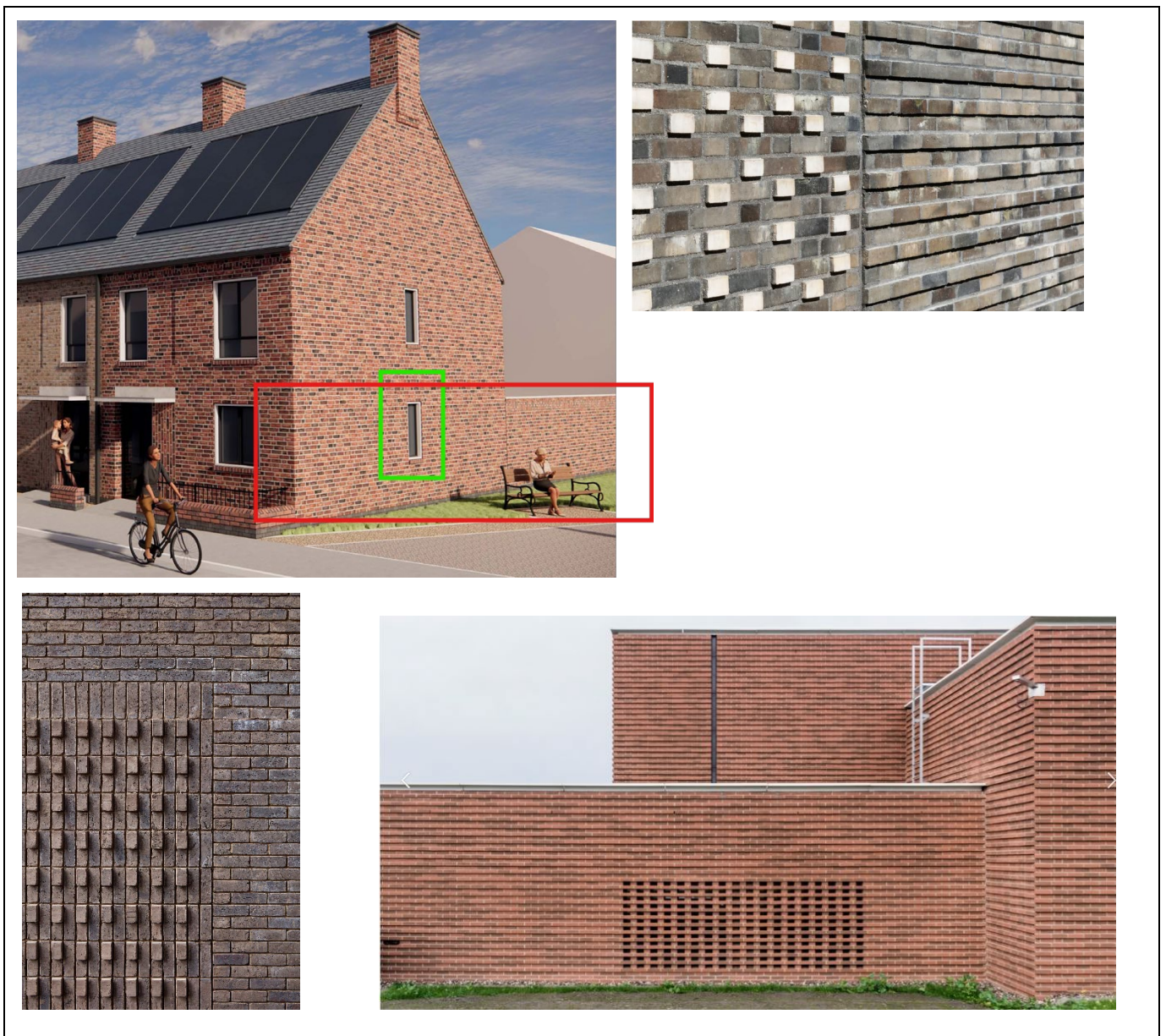
Gable Elevations and brick walls

Consider how long brick walls can be broken up to introduce greater depth and visual interest. This could be achieved through the use of landscape planting in front of elevations, as well as variations in brick detailing, bonding patterns, and subtle projection or recess to reduce the appearance of long, uninterrupted façades.

The side elevations are particularly weak and lack sufficient visual interest, especially in prominent locations. These should be enhanced through improved architectural detailing and articulation. The use of dual-aspect or dual-frontage dwellings should be explored where properties address two streets, helping to create more active and visually engaging frontages.

Further consideration should be given to how brick detailing and material variation can be used more effectively to improve overall visual amenity.

Where development fronts onto Egerton Street, the relationship with the proposed public seating space requires careful attention. In particular, the ground floor window of the nearest dwelling is unlikely to function well in this location due to privacy and overlooking concerns. A stronger, well-defined landscaped buffer is needed to create an appropriate transition between private residential space and the public realm, ensuring both usability and amenity are protected. Consider how large blank walls can be broken up with some depth and visual interest. Consider planting in front and brick detailing and bonding to improve long, blank elevations.



Form / Massing

The three-storey options appear overly prominent in height. I would request extending the street elevation to include All Saints Church to better understand the proposal in its wider context. It is important that All Saints Church remains the dominant and most prominent building within the area, and as such, the proposed roof heights should not exceed that of the church.

Careful consideration should also be given to potential privacy and overlooking impacts, particularly if amendments are made to the layout and orientation of the dwellings.

Front dormer windows are generally discouraged across the borough. Although they are proposed to the rear in this instance, they are likely to remain highly visible due to the site's open and exposed nature, with multiple elevations fronting the public realm.

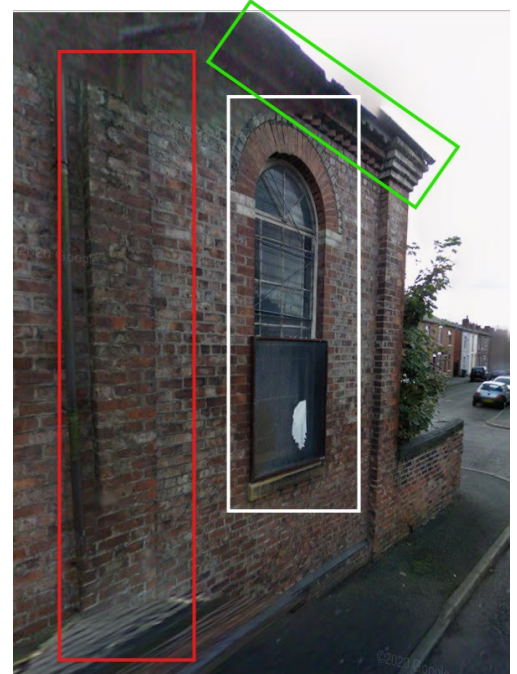
A more contextually appropriate approach would be to maintain the prevailing two-storey scale of the surrounding terraced housing, ensuring the development aligns more closely with the

Materials

High-quality materials are expected throughout the scheme, including natural slate roofing and high-quality brickwork, which can be secured via condition (submission of samples). The design should reflect the architectural character of the area more strongly. A more thorough site analysis would allow the designer to identify and reinterpret local features—particularly attractive brick detailing seen in surrounding properties and the former building on the site. *Referencing elements such as brick piers (for example, aligned with rainwater goods) would demonstrate a more positive and policy-compliant contextual response.*

Roof

Solar panels should be integrated sensitively within the roof plane, ideally set flush with the tiles.



Roof detailing should remain tidy and minimal, with slim-profile elements. As discussed earlier, dormers are dissuaded but where they are considered acceptable, materials should be clearly specified and carefully considered, particularly given their likely visibility.

Canopies

The precedent image is helpful; however, the porch could be slightly projected to introduce greater depth and articulation to the elevation while maintaining the proposed brick detailing.

Servicing

Meter boxes should not be located on principal frontages. Rainwater downpipes should be positioned discreetly, preferably to the sides or consider recessed brick detailing that be used to minimise visual clutter.

Colour

While variation in brick colour is not opposed, a red-toned palette would likely be more successful. Given the short terrace length, multiple colours may appear disjointed. Subtle variation within a consistent red palette would provide interest while maintaining a more cohesive and durable appearance.

Next Steps

Please reconsult on design changes.