

## Officer Report

**Case Reference:** PL/2026/0253  
**Location:** 5 Ruskin Road, Rochdale, OL11 2RT  
**Proposal:** Change of use of existing side extension to form a self-contained dwelling including alteration of existing window into a new doorway to front elevation, (Retrospective)  
**Recommendation:** Refuse  
**Officer:** Rosalind Gralton

### Site

The site relates to a semi-detached two storey property on the southeastern side of Ruskin Road, facing Northwest. The property benefits from a two-storey side extension, approved under reference 20/01210/HOUS. The site is located within the defined urban area. The site and it's surrounding area is residential in character, with post-war semi-detached and terrace properties. The application property faces northwest onto Ruskin Road. The property benefits from a private rear garden area.

### PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks to subdivide the property from 1 single dwellinghouse (Class C3 use), to 2 dwellinghouses. The divide would predominately be that the original dwelling would form one two-bedroom dwellinghouse, and the two-storey side extension, and single storey rear extension would form the second dwellinghouse.

The original dwellinghouse (now one singular unit) would have 2 bedrooms across 2 storeys and would have a floorspace of 101.5sqm

The new, second dwellinghouse created would have 1 bedroom across two storeys and would have a floorspace of 42sqm.

The works have already been carried out and the development seeks permission retrospectively.

### Relevant Planning Policy

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

JP-S1 Sustainable Development

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-P2 Heritage

JP-H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO2 – Creating successful and healthy communities

C1 – Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places

SO3 – Improving Design, image and quality of place

P1 – Improving image

P3 – Improving design of new development

SO4 – Promoting a greener environment

G7- Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

SO5 – Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

T2 – Improving accessibility

DM1 – General Development Requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 – Defined Urban Area

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Supplementary Planning Guidance note 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (June 2016).

**Site History:**

20/01210/HOUS - Two storey side extension following demolition of existing single storey side extension - Grant subject to conditions 2020-11-20

**Representations:**

The application was publicised by neighbour notification. No letters of representation were received.

## **Principle of Development**

The site is located within the Defined Urban Area as designated under the Proposals Map of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). On the basis that the proposal would make a small contribution of one dwelling to housing supply within the Borough, whilst being in a sustainable location within reasonable proximity to local amenities and public transport facilities, it is considered that the principle of development is therefore acceptable in accordance with Core Strategy polices C1 and saved UDP policy G/D/1 and the NPPF.

## **Occupier Amenity**

Core Strategy policy DM1 requires all development proposals to demonstrate that they will not have a negative impact upon the amenity of future residents and occupiers. Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that planning decisions should result in places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Additionally, Places for Everyone Policy JP-H3 requires proposals for new dwellings to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards. These detail that for a one bedroom, two storey dwellinghouse, for two bedspaces, a minimum floor area of 58sqm shall be met and for a two-bedroom two storey dwelling, a minimum of 70sqm shall be met. The minimum bedroom size for a double bedroom in a dwelling must have a floor area of 11.5sqm, with a minimum width of 2.75m for the first double bedroom in a dwelling, with a width of 2.55m for every double bedroom after.

The larger two-bedroom dwelling to be created, which mainly relates to most of the original house, without the two storey side extension, will have a floorspace of 70sqm across 2 floors. No extensions alterations have been proposed to facilitate this. Given the size of the floorspace of the property, no concerns are held regarding the 'original' property being reduced in size following the subdivision. The floorspace of bedrooms in this property measure 13.7m<sup>2</sup> and 10.7m<sup>2</sup>. While the second bedroom falls below this minimum standard for a double bedroom, it is well over the minimum for a single bedroom (7.5sqm). No concerns are raised with the sizes of the bedrooms in this dwelling, or the level of outlook provided.

However, the proposed one-bedroom dwelling would result in a floorspace of 25.6sqm, well below the required minimum standard of 58sqm for a two storey one bedroom property. It is noted the bedroom size is 8.3sqm, with a width of 2.2m, reducing to 1.4m for the majority of the room, due to the location of the staircase. Access through the bedroom is the only way of reaching the only bathroom in the property, which is included in this calculation. Given the overall very small size of the property, the proposal fails to meet the policy requirements of Policy JP-H3.

In tandem with this, the proposed unit is designed to provide light from the front and rear elevation windows only. As such, the living room/kitchen/diner is served by one window at the front of the property, which is set back 1m from the front elevation of the subdivided property. The kitchen would be served by one window at the rear, and a bedroom served by a window at the front only. Given the layout of the house, the

length of the rooms would result in a significant amount of darkness throughout the day, and minimal natural light reaching the properties.

While the first floor of the property to be created was previously a habitable bedroom window as part of an extended area of a dwellinghouse, may have previously been considered acceptable in regard to provision of daylight, the new property that this subdivision would create would be predominately based on solely two habitable rooms; a downstairs living room and an upstairs bedroom. Both rooms would have very little access to natural light and overall would highlight the dwelling created would have a poor standard of amenity for the occupant. As such, it would not be suitable for the window to be obscurely glazed and highlights the very poor standard of amenity the occupant of the new dwelling would receive.

Section 5.4 of the Residential Standards SPD states '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'. The character of the surrounding area, and the host property is defined by suburban properties with private rear gardens providing ample amenity space for residents. No details of the subdivided rear garden are shown and no access to the rear garden is provided from the proposed unit. As such, the garden would be redundant and not provide any amenity to the occupant; such arrangement would require the obscure glazing of the rear window which would compound the poor standard of amenity offered by the proposal.

Therefore in light of the above, the proposals would comprise a wholly unsatisfactory standard of amenity for its occupiers on the basis of the extensive shortfall versus the relevant nationally described space standard and single aspect, north-facing design and therefore fails to accord with the requirements of Policy DM1 of the adopted Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **Highways**

Policy T2 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to improve accessibility by locating development where good access to public transport is available or can be provided and, in all circumstances, prioritises the safety, accessibility and amenity of those who live or have business in the area. Policy DM1 also states that all development proposals should provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location.

The proposed unit to be created would be a one-bedroom property located in the Kirkholt and Balderstone area of Rochdale. The site is well located to the M62 motorway and has multiple bus services within reach providing access to the centre of Rochdale. Due to the style of properties, no off-street parking is provided in this location, neither for the subdivided property or the proposed units. On street parking is relied upon, and the addition of one car in this circumstance would not be considered unacceptable based on the current arrangement.

As such, Officers consider that the proposed parking would have an acceptable impact on the highway network in line with Policy T2 of the Core Strategy, JP-C8 of PfE and the NPPF.

### **Design and visual amenity**

The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. This is largely reflected within Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy, which requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design.

The proposal would not result in any external changes, other than the reorganisation of the front fenestration to introduce the front door on the front elevation. This is not considered unacceptable. In design terms, the proposal would be in accordance with policies DM1 and P3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and the policies contained within the NPPF.

**Recommendation:** Refuse

### **Refusal(s) (1)**

- 1 The proposed development will result in the new dwellinghouse created with habitable rooms that will have a total floorspace which falls substantially below the relevant Nationally Described Space Standards, in direct contravention of the requirements of Places for Everyone Policy JP-H3. The proposals will receive limited amounts of natural daylight by reason of the narrow design of the new dwellinghouse, the arrangement and design of windows, need for obscure glazing and north orientation, that would have a detrimental impact upon on the residential amenity of future occupants of the dwelling. Overall, the proposals fall exceedingly short of the expectations of Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the Council's Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 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:
  - 2406 - block plan

- 2406 - floor plans
- 2406 - existing plans
- 2406 - Application form
- 2406 - elevational plans