

Officer Report

Case Reference: 24/00927/FUL
Location: Hillside And Land To South Of Stable Hills Chadwick Hall Road Rochdale OL11 4DJ
Proposal: Erection of 2no. three storey detached dwellings and associated works including excavation and landscaping, creation of new vehicular access and car parking
Recommendation: Refuse
Officer: Anna Hayes

SITE

The application relates to land to the south of Stable Hills which is a detached property located off Chadwick Hall Road. The site would be accessed independently via a strip of land that would run to the north and west of Stable Hills. The application site slopes down steeply to the south and at the time of the Officers visit, the site was covered in rubble and waste material.

To the south, the site overlooks an area of open land and the River Roch. The open land is designated as a Greenspace Corridor under the Council's saved UDP Proposals Map and it includes agricultural land, and a former water treatment works. The Springfield Park Golf Club is located to the southwest bank of the River Roch and vegetation runs along the banks of the river.

Adjacent to the application site, to the immediate west of Stable Hills, is a Grade II listed property, Hill House. The listing description for the property reads:

"House. "IH 1609" on door lintel. Dressed with stone with C20 render and roof tiles. 3-unit hearth-passage plan with two storeys throughout, a C20 crosswing to the right, porch and a garage extension, and parallel range to the rear. Ground floor mullion windows are double chamfered and of 4, 5, 2 (fire window) and 4 lights with continuous ovolo-moulded band above. The chamfered door surround has an inscribed Tudor arched lintel. The upper floor mullioned windows are flush chamfered and are of the same number of lights as the ground floor. The gables are coped and have kneelers. The rear is largely obscured by the garages and parallel range which are either heavily restored or C20 in a C17 style (as in the C20 right hand wing)."

To the east of the site there is a more modern (mid to late C20th) residential development that comprises a crescent of detached and semi-detached properties. To the north of the site along Chadwick Hall Road, the area is also characterised by residential development, comprising a mix of property styles.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of two detached dwellings on the site. The properties would be set into the hillside and constructed against the rear (northern) boundary of the site. The proposed plans are a replica of those approved under application 20/00865/FUL in October 2020.

The proposed dwellings would be identical in elevations and floorplans and would be split over three terraced levels, including the flat rooftop parking area and external amenity area, with the lower levels projecting beyond those above. The fenestration to the lower levels would be limited to the south (front) elevation where full height glazing would overlook the external terraces.

Externally the properties would be faced in stone, with vertical timber effect tiles proposed between some of the window openings. The roof level and lower ground floor levels would have non-reflective glass to external balustrades (height of 1m) with non-reflective glazing to the elevations. An external staircase would be incorporated to the west of the property, providing access from the basement to roof level.

Internally the properties would each provide five bedrooms at basement level, with the kitchen, dining room and lounge located at lower ground floor level with an outdoor terrace. At ground floor level (entrance level), the dwelling would include an outdoor terrace with a roof top parking area.

Elsewhere on the site a shared driveway is to be provided to access the property, and this would utilise the existing entrance to Stable Hills and then run around the east of the property and into the site. The driveway would lead to a roof top parking area for either property. The remainder of the site is to be landscaped, with the embankment re-profiled using excavated material where possible. The stone walling used to face the property would be extended to the east of the property as part of the landscaping works and to provide a boundary to the driveway and trees and shrub planting is proposed in front of the walls. Additional shrub planting is proposed on the embankment slope.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Development Plan

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

The development plan for the proposal consists of the Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan, Rochdale Core Strategy (CS), adopted 2016, and saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies. The Council also has an adopted series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) (2024)

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:

Sustainable and Resilient Places

JP-S1 Sustainable Development

JP-S2 Carbon and Energy

JP-S3 Heat and Energy Networks

JP-S4 Flood Risk and the Water Environment

JP-S5 Clean Air

JP-S6 Resource Efficiency

Places for Homes

JP-H1 Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development

JP-H2 Affordability of New Housing

JP-H3 Type, Size and Design of New Housing

JP-H4 Density of New Housing

Greener Places

JP-G1 Landscape Character

JP-G7 Trees and Woodland

JP-G8 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

JP-G9 The Green Belt

Places for People

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-P2 Heritage

Connected Places

JP-C1 An Integrated Network

JP-C2 Digital Connectivity

JP-C6 Walking and Cycling

JP-C8 Transport Requirements of New Development

Rochdale Core Strategy (CS)

SO2 Creating successful and healthy communities

C1 Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places (partially replaced by PfE JP-H1)

C3 Delivering the right type of housing

C6 Improving health and well being

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P1 Improving image

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 Promoting a Greener Environment

G6 Enhancing green infrastructure

G7 Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

G8 Managing water resources and flood risk

G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

SO5 Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

T2 Improving accessibility

Managing delivery and monitoring progress

DM1 General Development requirements

SD1 Delivering sustainable development

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

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

Other

The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) adopted by Rochdale Borough Council are also relevant:

- Guidelines & Standards for Residential Development SPD, June 2016;
- Design and planning process – good practice guide SPD;
- Residential Design Guide SPD; and,
- Urban Design Guide SPD.

Also, of relevance are:

- National Design Guide (2019) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

20/00865/FUL - Erection of 2 no. three-storey tiered hillside dwellings to the rear of Stable Hills – Approved 27 October 2020

17/00978/FUL – Erection of detached dwelling – Approved. 17/00148/FUL – Erection of new detached dwelling including demolition of existing stables – Approved.

16/00767/FUL – Erection of a new detached dwelling including demolition of existing stables – Withdrawn.

09/D51943 – Erection of new detached dwelling including demolition of existing stables – Approved.

08/D51571 – Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of new 2/3 storey dwelling with associated pool house and landscaping – Approved.

08/D51202 – Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of new 2/3 storey dwelling with detached pool house – Refused and Appeal Dismissed.

04/D43824 - Renewal of permission for change of use of premises from stables to residential – Approved.

99/D36964 - Renewal of permission for change of use of premises from stables to residential – Approved.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Urban Design

Raises concerns relating to the design of the proposal and confirms that the development risks being intrusive to the natural landscape and damaging to the historic environment

Highways And Engineering

No objection to the proposal.

Environmental Health - Noise/Odours

No objections to the proposal in principle. Recommends a condition requiring the submission of a construction management plan to cover areas such as noise, vibration, mud and dust suppression. A construction working hours condition is also recommended noting the proximity of the site to neighbouring residential properties.

Tree Officer

No comments received to date

Conservation And Design

Confirms that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of Hill House. This harm needs to be clearly justified and outweighed by public benefits.

United Utilities

Confirms that the development should include sustainable drainage systems and that the applicant should consider their drainage plans in accordance with the drainage hierarchy outlined within the NPPF.

Lead Local Flood Authority/Drainage

Confirms that the site is not within a designated flood zone therefore a Flood Risk Assessment is not required. The submission of a drainage strategy is required prior to the approval of any planning permission.

Environmental Control (Landfill Gas)

No objection to the proposal. The submitted phase 1 report and recommendation for further investigation are accepted and recommends a condition requiring an investigation and risk assessment to be submitted prior to the commencement of the development, if approved.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)

Initially requested that a Preliminary Ecological Assessment be submitted, though full comments have not been received and remain outstanding. No comments in relation to trees have been received.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the application has been advertised by neighbour notification letters and site notice.

7 separate letters of objection have been received. The comments are summarised below, with some reference made to existing works carried out on the site:

Visual Amenity

- Will be unsightly
- Negative effect on the natural views from my back garden
- Access road would not be suitable at the side of the property

Residential Amenity

- Current access track constructed at levels higher than approved plans requiring reduction to comply.
- Resulting elevated road would sit above neighbouring gardens, harming outlook and creating safety concerns during and after construction.
- Continued disturbance to neighbours in terms of noise during the construction period.

Heritage

- Detrimental impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Hill House – conflict with policy BE/15 of the UDP.
- Proposed modern dwellings would detract from the setting of Hill House
- A previous application was dismissed by the planning inspectorate on the grounds of detract from the setting of Hill House.

Ecology and Wildlife

- The development would have a negative effect on the Roch valley wildlife/greenspace maintenance framework

- Wildlife such as foxes, deer and rare birds frequent the site and would be subject to disturbance and probable relocation

Parking and Highways

- Hillside house plot already been so overdeveloped causing parking problems with congestion and obstructing the footways and highway.
- The street has already been developed to add 9 new apartments in at Bamford Brook on Chadwick Hall Road – street is getting overdeveloped and past its highway capacity.
- Difficulty of access to the site – new roadway is narrow and steep

Other

- Unsuitability of the site and ground conditions
- No topsoil removal prior to material dumping; use of non-inert waste materials alleged.
- Reports of severe vibration/shaking to nearby properties (Links View) during initial works
- No surface water drainage infrastructure installed to date; concerns over compliance with approved drainage condition and impact on neighbours
- Queries over whether previously required pre-commencement conditions have been discharged, including:
 - o Surface and foul drainage scheme
 - o Habitat enhancement measures (bat/bird boxes)
 - o Land contamination remediation scheme and need for reassessment due to imported materials
- Concerns regarding absence or non-compliance with an approved Construction Method Statement (CMS), including:
 - o Working hours
 - o Materials handling and storage
 - o Dust and dirt control
 - o Site hoarding and neighbour protection measures
- Alleged damage to neighbouring property boundary fence not repaired.

- Reports of unsafe construction practices, including machinery oversailing into neighbouring gardens.
- Requests for mitigation/monitoring of ground vibration and condition surveys of affected properties, with developer responsibility for repairs.
- Allegation that contractor actions breached CMS requirements and failed to minimise neighbour impacts.
- Significant quantities of mixed, potentially non-inert waste identified in access track construction.
- Natural spring reportedly covered without drainage control, raising land stability concerns.

Councillor Stephen Anstee has also confirmed his objection to the application.

Case officer comments:-

The following issues are not relevant to the decision, comprising non-material planning considerations:

- Private issues between neighbouring e.g. damage to property
- Problems arising from the construction period of any works e.g noise, dust, construction vehicles
- Loss of view

There is no extant planning permission for the development of two dwellings on this site and the pre-commencement conditions attached to planning permission 20/00865/FUL have not been discharged.

Ecology

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions including self-build and custom build development, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met. This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

PfE Policy JP-G8 also states that through local planning and associated activities a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought where relevant. In

particular, development will be expected to achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%.

Policy G7 requires that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection and that opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported. It is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. CS Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

The application has been described as a custom or self-build development, which is an exemption of the BNG requirement. The National Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 57-016-20210208) states that:

“In considering whether a home is a self-build or custom build home, relevant authorities must be satisfied that the initial owner of the home will have primary input into its final design and layout.

Off-plan housing, homes purchased at the plan stage prior to construction and without input into the design and layout from the buyer, are not considered to meet the definition of self-build and custom housing.”

The Council have requested additional information from the applicant to confirm how the proposal meets the definition as set out in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, however the Council has received no such response. From the information available on file and as presented by the agent, the applicant purchased the land with lapsed planning permission with no prior involvement or primary input into the final design and layout. It is understood that the land has been purchased with the intention to reapply for planning permission with previously approved plans, prior to construction, with no amendments made to the design to suit the current developer. In the absence of any information to the contrary provided by the applicant (as requested by Officers) the Council are not satisfied that the proposal meets the definition of self-build and custom housing. The application should therefore be accompanied by a BNG assessment.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) have also been consulted on the proposal and have requested that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) be submitted for consideration since no ecological reports have been submitted. This information is required prior to determination and has been requested from the applicant; however, no such updated information has been provided.

On this basis, the application fails to provide an up-to-date Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, as required by national and local planning policy. In the absence of this information, the Local Planning Authority is unable to assess the potential impacts of the development on biodiversity, including any impacts on protected species and habitats and secure the required 10% net gain. As such, the proposal is contrary to the requirements of paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF, PfE Policy JP-G8, Core Strategy Policy G7 and the statutory duty

under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended in 2021) to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Without this information, the application is considered to be incomplete and does not provide sufficient evidence to enable a lawful and informed decision to be made and understand the impacts on ecology.

Drainage

Policy G8 requires the Council to manage water resources and flood risk. Saved UDP Policy EM/7 states that development will not be permitted in areas identified as flood plains, or other areas where development could contribute to increased flood risk.

Consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority confirms that the site is less than 1 hectare, is not within a designated flood risk zone and does not appear to have any local flood risk features / issues. Therefore, Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is not required. However, the applicant must still demonstrate adequate surface and foul water drainage provisions to ensure effective water management.

The LLFA advise that the application should be supported with an acceptable drainage strategy/ proposal; however as concluded with application 20/00865/FUL, this can be secured by condition requiring full drainage details and this should include the provision of sustainable drainage in accordance with policy G8 of the Core Strategy.

Contamination

A Contaminated Land Phase 1 report has been submitted with the application and assessed by the Council's Public Protection Officer. The report recommends that the site would be acceptable for residential use, but it is also recommended that soil sampling be undertaken.

Following the Officer's site visit, the site was found to be in a state of disrepair with rubble and building material dispersed all over the site. the Council's contaminated land officer has also confirmed the submitted Phase 1 report is now out of date and a revision is required. They have agreed that this could be reasonably secured by planning condition in order to secure the safe development of the site, in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy policy G9 and the NPPF.

Land Stability

Policy G9 of the Core Strategy requires that any risks associated with land instability are identified prior to any development taking place on that land and that the identified actions are taken.

The application is supported by a Slope Stability Assessment. The report notes that the only Site investigations carried out prior for application 20/00865/FUL were undertaken by Mini Soil Surveys Ltd in July 2007 and comprised 3No. shallow window sample boreholes (BHs1-3). An updated report has now been obtained from

the Landmark Information Group in February 2025. Surveys undertaken in 2017 and recently in 2024 have been compared and it is noted that earthworks have been undertaken in the intervening period with the formation of an access roadway into the slope and displacement of earth down the slope.

The Application Site itself was noted as very low to no risk with regards to ground stability related issues, from both man-made and natural ground conditions within the Landmark Report (2025). The report advises that the proposed dwellings will comprise of reinforced concrete & masonry construction, seated into the existing site slope, approximately following the existing contours with retaining walls to the rear faces. The construction will reduce the overall weight of the soil in the slope, thus reducing ground pressures and therefore the risk of gross instability, however this will be subject to further investigation, detailed calculation, and further slope stability analysis undertaken as part of the Building Regulations & foundation/retaining wall design stage.

The report conducted by TJ Booth Associates concludes that, referring to the borehole logs and Landmark data search, it has been shown that the risk to slope stability of the present hillside slope is very low. The proposal to construct two dwellings into the hillside will reduce the overall slope mass and thus improve overall stability. This study has not identified any issues with the existing Site regarding slope stability, that would give rise to the necessity of refusing planning consent.

It is recognised that additional structural detail may be required at the building regulations stage of the development, and further details regarding retaining structures can also be requested as part of a landscaping condition. However, the Council satisfied that there are no under planning concerns with respect the structural stability of the site and policy G9 of the Core Strategy.

Principle

The proposed application site is located within a previously undeveloped (or greenfield) area of the Defined Urban Area as designated under the Proposals Map of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). New development, wherever possible and appropriate, should be concentrated within the urban area in order to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside.

The adopted Rochdale Core Strategy Policy C1 requires the provision of additional dwellings to assist in the creation of successful, inclusive and mixed communities and meet the housing needs. The policy seeks to maximise the use of brownfield sites; however, this does not preclude the development of greenfield sites as it states that the development of greenfield sites may be necessary to deliver the target. PfE Policy JP-H1 sets out that within the period of 2022-2039, Rochdale is expected to deliver a total of 10,472 dwellings.

Whilst the development would make use of greenfield land, it is within the urban area and the principle of residential development has already been considered acceptable at this location as outlined by the planning history section of this report, therefore is found to be acceptable in principle.

Design and Heritage

Design of the proposed dwellings

Policies DM1 and P3 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to demonstrate high quality design. In addition, paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) state 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.

Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, significant weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Following the officers site visit, it was noted that the submitted location plan and site plan are no longer accurate – excluding relevant surrounding built development, namely the large outbuilding at Yasmeen House (Chadwick Hall Road) to the west. The site was also found to be laid with rubble and old building material therefore it is understood that the existing site levels plan which has been provided to be inaccurate. Officers requested updated plans based on accurate and up to date OS maps so necessary assessments could be carried out, however such plans were not forthcoming.

In any case the following observations could be made-

The proposed dwellings would be set into the hillside in a staggered three-storey form (including roof level). The contemporary design approach, characterised by extensive glazing and clean architectural lines, would result in development that appears visually prominent within the landscape, particularly given its elevated and exposed position. Whilst the use of natural stone and timber seeks to reflect the surrounding context, the scale, form and glazing ensure the buildings would remain conspicuous in views from the valley floor, and as such, in the view of current Officers, the development is not fully sympathetic to the character and appearance of the site.

The Council's Urban Designer has also been consulted on the development proposals and expresses the following (summarised below):

- Staggered hillside layout is supported and responds well to site constraints, helping to minimise impacts on neighbouring outlook (Hill House and Stable Hills).
- Site considered capable of accommodating two dwellings of this scale.
- Further information required, including detailed section drawings (both directions) to fully understand levels, transitions and relationship to surrounding properties (including Links View).

- Design statement is lacking, insufficient explanation of design evolution, approach and material choices.

- Proposed materials are criticised:

- o Extensive use of render is poorly integrated and not reflective of successful local examples.

- o Timber detailing appears generic and likely to age poorly.

- o Limited information on stonework specification, with “random course” insufficiently defined.

- Overall design lacks a strong response to local character and context and is not considered sympathetic to the surrounding area.

- Concern that similar modern design approaches have previously resulted in poor-quality development, contributing to harm to the setting of Hill House and Stable Hills.

- Risk that the proposal would further erode the historic and architectural quality of the area due to insensitive design and material choices.

Notwithstanding the individual concerns of the current Officer, Urban Design Officer and inaccurate plans, material weight is afforded to the previous planning permission granted for an identical scheme on the site, which, although now lapsed, nevertheless establishes that the Local Planning Authority has previously accepted the principle of residential development of comparable scale, form and visual impact in this location. In addition, it is accepted that the proposed landscaping strategy (to be secured by condition) would seek to provide a degree of mitigation over time, albeit limited, softening the appearance of the development in longer views.

Overall, considering both design and heritage matters, the submitted plans do not accurately show surrounding built development and therefore fail to provide an accurate site context. As a result, the Local Planning Authority cannot properly assess the impact of the proposal on the character of the area within its current context and the cumulative impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Hill House. Insufficient information has therefore been provided to enable a lawful and informed decision, contrary to the NPPF, Policy DM1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and Policy JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan.

Heritage Impact

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Under Chapter 16, paragraphs 210, 212 and 213 of the National Planning Policy Framework set out that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. Paragraph 212 is clear that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.

Paragraph 215 states that, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Policy P2 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will protect the Borough's heritage by conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Policy JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, states that development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy.

The application site lies to the south of Stable Hills and southeast of Hill House, a Grade II listed early 17th-century farmhouse dating from 1609, which retains historic features such as stone mullions and dressings. Originally part of a larger rural estate, the surrounding land was progressively developed from the mid-20th century, with the estate sold off and housing introduced to the north, east, and south, eroding much of its original countryside setting and some of these works have caused harm to its significance. Despite this, Hill House retains significance through its historic interest and remaining rural context, particularly its relationship with the open River Roch valley. The site itself slopes steeply towards the River Roch. The river valley remains open and undeveloped with important views both towards and from Hill House across the undeveloped valley, maintaining a visual and historic link to its former isolated setting.

The Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted and confirms that the principal heritage consideration relates to the impact of the proposal on the significance of the Grade II listed Hill House, which, despite later 20th century development within its former estate, retains an important relationship with the open rural character of the Roch Valley. The proposed development of the remaining open land within its setting would further erode this relationship.

Whilst the stepped design responds to the site's topography and may reduce visual impact from higher ground, the dwellings would remain prominent in views from the valley floor. Concerns are therefore raised that the scale, massing and materiality of the development would compete with and detract from the listed building. Although landscaping would provide some mitigation, this would not fully address the harm, which is identified as less than substantial. It would neither preserve nor enhance the listed building's special interest. This harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

In addition, clarification is sought by the Conservation Officer in respect of the proposed materials, with a preference for a high-quality natural palette, including natural timber rather than the timber-effect materials currently indicated.

The previously identified public benefits of the former planning permission (20/00865/FUL) relate to the delivery of two additional dwellings contributing to housing supply, the use of a site in a sustainable and accessible location, and the economic activity generated through construction and associated employment. The scheme was also considered to provide high-quality residential development and to support the delivery of higher value housing, aligning with the Council's 2017-2022 strategic objectives to diversify the housing stock, enhance design quality, and attract higher income households to the Borough.

These benefits were previously afforded significant weight in application 20/00865/FUL, particularly in the context of the Council's Housing Strategy (2017–2022). However, that strategy is now out of date and the weight that can be attributed to these benefits is correspondingly reduced. Furthermore, since the 2020 decision there has been a material change in the strategic planning context through the adoption of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024), which identifies and allocates sites across the borough and wider city region for the delivery of substantial levels of new housing, including higher value, larger family homes in appropriate locations. In this context, the delivery of two dwellings on this site would make only a modest contribution towards identified housing needs. These benefits are not site-specific and could be realised on allocated sites in less sensitive locations without harm to designated heritage assets and therefore attract limited weight in the heritage planning balance.

Residential amenity

Policy DM1 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires development proposals to demonstrate that they will not have a negative impact upon the amenities of future residents and occupiers. The National Planning Policy Framework advises that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Further to the above are the considerations of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development'. The SPD establishes that the following minimum space standards will be applied to all new residential developments and development which affect existing residential properties:

- 21m between directly facing principle windows of habitable rooms, at an upper floor level and 10.5m between a principal window at an upper floor level and a directly facing boundary of the curtilage.
- 14m between a principal window and any directly facing two storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room.
- 10m between a principal window and any directly facing single storey elevation which does not contain a principal window to a habitable room.

As detailed above, the application proposes a design for two dwellings that would be set into the hillside. This would result in minimal above ground development, and all windows and amenity space would face south towards the Roch Valley. The nearest properties to the site would be those at Links View to the east, Yasmeen House to the west and Stable Hills to the north. There would however be in excess of 30m separation distance between the side and rear elevations of the proposed dwellings and habitable room windows (principal elevations) of these adjacent properties. These separation distances would be in excess of the minimal distances set out in the SPD and would protect the nearest existing properties from any harmful levels of overlooking/loss of privacy. The partly subterranean design also means that the development would not result in an overbearing relationship with neighbours or result in any excessive levels of overshadowing.

In order to protect residential amenity during construction, if approved, Environmental Health recommend a condition controlling construction hours and a Construction Management Plan to cover areas such as noise, vibration, mud and dust suppression.

Further to the above it is considered that the proposed siting, scale and layout of the development would result in no undue harm to residential amenity and the application would accord, in this regard, with policy DM1 of the Core Strategy and policy in the NPPF.

Highway safety

Policy DM1 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires all development proposals, provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring and servicing arrangements, taking into account the proposed use and location. Policy T2 of the Core Strategy sets out that development proposals are required to satisfy the Council's accessibility hierarchy and are required to provide parking in compliance with the Council's Maximum Car Parking Standards set out in Appendix 5 of the CS.

To assess the application in respect of highway safety and the above policies consultations have been undertaken with the Council's Highways Service who have confirmed no objections to the application. The addition of two dwellings at this location is unlikely to generate any noticeable amount of traffic on the local highway network and the proposed parking provision, which allows for the off-street parking of at least two vehicles on the roof area of either dwelling, is acceptable. When looking at access to the site it is noted that this would be along a narrow driveway, but this would be of sufficient width for two vehicles to pass. The Highways Officer has noted that due to the arrangement of the private driveway, refuse vehicles will not be able to enter the site and as such refuse must take place from the adjacent Highway, for which there are no highway concerns raised. Alternatively, private refuse collection could be arranged, and this would be outside of the Council's control. Given the existing refuse collection arrangement between properties at this location, the resulting arrangement is considered acceptable.

Further to the above it is considered that the development would not result in any undue harm to highway safety. The application therefore accords, in this regard, with policies DM1 and T2 of the Core Strategy and policy in the NPPF.

Carbon and Energy

PfE formally sets out Greater Manchester's ambitious target to be carbon neutral by 2038. It notes that the uplift to Part L of the Building Regulations (Conservation of Fuel and Power) announced in December 2021, is to be precursor to the introduction of the Future Homes Standard which is anticipated to take effect in 2025. The policy position will follow the trajectory of FHS in relation to carbon reduction with applicants demonstrating how savings have been maximised following the energy hierarchy. As of 2025, applicants are required to demonstrate how carbon reductions have been maximised with an opportunity to offset any residual carbon (above net-zero) to a carbon offset fund. The approach will be reviewed in line with future standards as they are introduced.

There is an expectation that new development will, unless it can be demonstrated that it is not practicable or financially viable, be net zero carbon which applies:

- from adoption– to regulated operational carbon emissions;
- from 2028 - to all emissions in construction

The latest Greater Manchester 5-Year Environment Plan (released December 2024) affirms the requirement for all new development to be operationally net-zero and guidance released by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in March 2025 is available to inform the appropriate design of new development.

Development proposals should set out how this has been achieved in an energy statement in accordance with the energy hierarchy, which in order of importance seeks to:

- i. Minimise energy demand;
- ii. Maximise energy efficiency;
- iii. Use renewable energy;
- iv. Use low carbon energy; and
- v. Utilise other energy sources.

The proposed dwellings include a high level of glazing to the south facing elevations. An energy and sustainability statement was therefore requested by Officers to demonstrate compliance with the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) in particular paragraph JP-S2 (f) and JP-P1 (15). However, no such statement was received. Officers are therefore not satisfied that the proposal has sought to maximize reductions in carbon emissions in line with the above relevant policy targets, including the minimisation of overheating risks and appropriate measures for

post occupancy evaluation. Since the outcome of these investigations may influence and result in relevant design alterations to the proposed dwellings, a condition requiring such details would not be considered appropriate in this instance.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy JP-S2 and JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, the Greater Manchester 5-Year Environment Plan (2024), and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework in seeking to support the transition to a low carbon future.

Trees and Landscaping

Policy G7 of the Core Strategy requires developments to protect existing biodiversity including trees and vegetation. The NPPF also requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

The application has been supported by an Arboricultural Assessment however this is dated 1st September 2017 and so is now over 8 years old. The report identifies trees, both within and outside of the site boundary, that are to remain along the site access. This involves those covered by TPO 278, including two individual Sycamore, a group of six Sycamore, and individual Elm and Beech tree.

The previous application (20/00865/FUL) identified that two unprotected tree groups (G21 – G25) defined as Category B ('Retention Desirable') are identified to be removed. G21 is within the red line boundary, whilst G25 falls outside of the site boundary but within the applicant's ownership within the blue edge. These trees comprise of semi to early mature mixed species. Pruning of some of the protected and non-protected trees along the entrance route is also proposed. No comments have been received from the Council's tree officer; however it is noted that in line with the previous approval (20/00865/FUL) no objections were raised by the Officer regarding the tree removal or pruning as proposed.

The submitted plans also clearly demonstrate the regrading works and amount of cut and it is considered that these works could take place without resulting in any undue harm. It is however considered that any approval on the site should include a condition requiring the submission of an up-to-date Arboricultural Method Statement that would ensure all the retained trees (within and outside of the site) are protected during the development/construction process and should include protective fencing in accordance with British Standard BS5837 (2012). Such a condition is in line with the recommendations of the submitted Arboricultural Impact Statement. In line with the previous recommendation of the Tree Officer, a Landscape Plan for the development should be required showing the locations, species, sizes and numbers of trees to be planted to replace any trees lost to the scheme, which should be on a two for one basis in accordance with PpE Policy JP-G7.12.

Further to the above it is considered that the works proposed to trees around the site are acceptable. Those proposed for removal are not mature and the Council could not require their protection.

Conclusion and planning balance

Overall, while the proposal would deliver two dwellings on a site where residential development has previously been accepted, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Hill House and the limited public benefits identified, including the delivery of two higher value family homes, is not considered sufficient to outweigh that harm, particularly given the reduced weight that can now be afforded to reliance on the out-of-date Housing Strategy 2017-2022 and the introduction of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan in March 2024. Additionally, the application does not provide sufficient ecological information to enable a lawful and fully informed assessment of its impacts on biodiversity and fails to demonstrate that the proposal would deliver measurable biodiversity improvements, including the required 10% biodiversity net gain or wider environmental enhancement. In the absence of supporting evidence, no environmental public benefit can be attributed to the proposal. The absence of an Energy Statement also means the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with the energy hierarchy, net zero carbon objectives and overheating mitigation requirements.

For these reasons, the application is recommended for refusal.

Recommendation: Refuse

Refusal(s) (5)

- 1 The proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Hill House through erosion of its remaining open setting and visual relationship with the Roch Valley. The identified public benefits of the scheme, including the provision of two market, higher value, larger dwellings, are limited and are not sufficient to outweigh that harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, paragraphs 212 and 215 of the NPPF, Policy P2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and Policy JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan.
- 2 In the absence of an up-to-date Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, the Local Planning Authority is unable to assess the likely effects of the development on biodiversity, including protected species and habitats, or to establish whether the proposal would secure the required 10% biodiversity net gain. The proposal is therefore contrary to paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF, Policy JP-G8 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, Policy G7 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended).
- 3 The submitted plans do not accurately show surrounding built development including accurate existing site levels and therefore fail to provide an

accurate site context. As a result, the Local Planning Authority cannot properly assess the impact of the proposal on the character of the area and the cumulative impact in the setting of the Grade II listed Hill House. Insufficient information has therefore been provided to enable a lawful and informed decision, contrary to the NPPF, Policy DM1 of the Rochdale Core Strategy and Policy JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan.

- 4 In the absence of an Energy Statement, the application fails to demonstrate how the proposed development would minimise energy demand, maximise energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in accordance with the established energy hierarchy, or how it would achieve or contribute towards net zero carbon targets. In particular, the proposed design includes extensive south-facing glazing which has not been demonstrated to avoid unacceptable overheating, excessive solar gain or increased cooling demand. As such, the Local Planning Authority cannot be satisfied that the proposal has appropriately addressed thermal comfort, energy performance or post-occupancy impacts. Given that such matters may necessitate fundamental design changes, they cannot reasonably be secured by condition. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy JP-S2 and JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, the Greater Manchester 5-Year Environment Plan (2024), and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework in seeking to support the transition to a low carbon future.
- 5 The Local Planning Authority offered solutions to the applicant in order to make the development acceptable. The applicant was however unwilling to amend the plans. Without these amendments the development would not improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and therefore does not comprise sustainable development.
- 1 The Local Planning Authority offered solutions to the applicant in order to make the development acceptable. The applicant was however unwilling to amend plans. Without these amendments the development would not improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and therefore does not comprise sustainable development.
- 2 The decision relates to the following plans and documents:
 - Drawing 020125JC-01 - Existing site plan and topo
 - Site Location Plan 1:1250 @A4
 - Drawing G262-008 – Proposed Basement Floor Plan

- Drawing G262-010revA – Proposed Elevations
- Drawing G262-006 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing G262-007 – Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing G262-009revA – Proposed Sections
- Drawing G262-005revA – Proposed Site Layout
- Application form signed and dated 13.02.2025
- Slope Stability Assessment dated 07 February 2025 prepared by TJ Booth Associates
- Arboricultural Report and Arboricultural Impact Assessment reference 13583a/PH prepared by JCA Arboricultural and Ecological Consultants dated 1st September 2017
- Design and Access Statement dated September 2017
- Heritage Statement dated 24 August 2020 prepared by Paul Butler Associates
- Phase 1 Environmental Audit prepared by TJ Booth Associates dated August 2017 rev 0.
- SCP Technical Note dated 04 August 2017 ref SCP/17197/TN01