



CAROLINE TAMWORTH PLANNING

Planning and Development

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

**PROPOSED CONVERSION AND EXTENSION OF STABLE BUILDING TO CREATE
SELF-BUILD DWELLING WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING**

**STABLE TO THE WEST OF FERN HILL FARM, FERN HILL LANE, LANEHEAD
ROCHDALE, OL12 6BW**

HERITAGE, PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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On Behalf Of

Mr & Mrs Green

CT1277

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1.0 The Site

1.1 The application relates to a stone stable building with a pitched slate roof and surrounding land to the west of Fern Hill. The land and building are owned by the applicants who occupy Fern Hill Farmhouse within the cluster of residential properties to the east. The stable was built following the granting of planning permission 06/D48316 in 2007 but has been used for garaging and storage by the applicants.



The application site

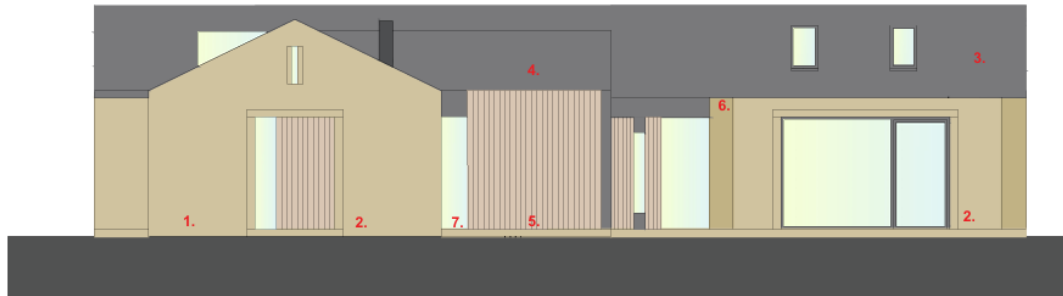
1.2 The area in front of the stables was originally laid with stone chippings but has since grassed over. There are mature trees to the south, west and along the access track to the east and views over the open land to the north.

2.0 The Proposal

2.1 The proposed development comprises the extension and conversion of the stable building to create 1 No. two bedroomed dwelling for the applicants to live in. Whilst they adore their current home at Fern Hill Farm, they need to move to a smaller property with level access for medical reasons but do not wish to leave the settlement of Fern Hill that has been their family home for 23 years.

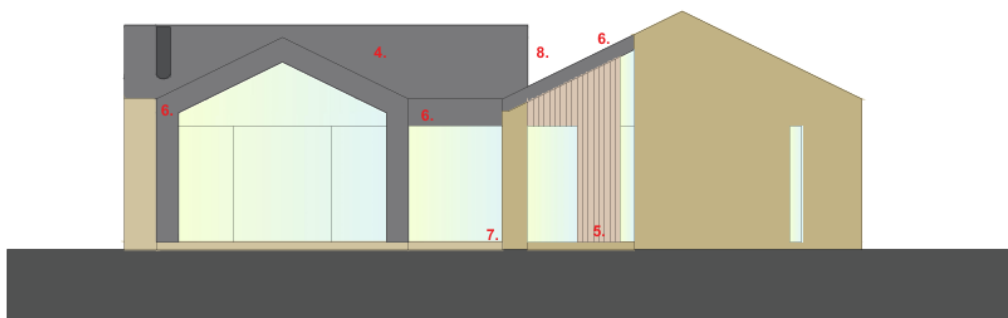
2.2 The existing building will be extended to the northern elevation and converted to provide an open plan kitchen/living/dining space, two bedrooms each with ensuite bathroom, a utility room and cloakroom. The ridge height to the existing building will remain unaltered and the ridge of the proposed extension will be set slightly lower. The extension will be faced in coursed natural stone with a slate roof to match the existing. Vertical timber cladding will add interest and a contrasting texture to the exterior and provide a low maintenance, sustainable, weatherproof system for the rural location.

2.3 Externally, there will be two car parking spaces provided on a grass grid driveway and a high-quality landscaping scheme implemented incorporating wildflower seeded meadows, native wild grasses, hedgerows and trees. The hard surfacing will include natural York stone flags and setts and a dry stone wall.



front elevation

Extract from Drawing 06 Rev D prepared by CJ Partnership (proposed northern elevation)



side elevation

Extract from Drawing 06 Rev D prepared by CJ Partnership (proposed western elevation)

3.0 Planning Policy Context

3.1 The site falls within the Green Belt on the Proposals Map used in conjunction with the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy. The Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan shows the site as falling within a safeguarding area for sandstone.

3.2 The following Core Strategy (CS) policies are relevant to the proposal:

- Policy P2 - Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- Policy P3 - Improving Design of New Development
- Policy C1 - Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places
- Policy C3 - Delivering the Right Type of Housing
- Policy G2 - Energy and new development
- Policy G4 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- Policy G8 - Drainage and Flood Risk
- Policy DM1 - General Development Requirements

3.3 The following saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies are also relevant:

- Policy G/D/2 - Green Belt
- Policy EM/7 - Development and Flood Risk
- M/2 - Sandstone

3.4 Advice contained within the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development' (2016) and within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also relevant, along with the following policies of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE). Due to the location of the site within a safeguarding area for sandstone, policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan DPD must also be considered.

- Policy JP-S1 - Sustainable Development
- Policy JP-S4 - Flood Risk and the Water Environment
- Policy JP-G9 - The Green Belt
- Policy JP-P2 - Heritage
- Policy JP-H3 - Type, Size and Design of New Housing

CS Policy P2 - Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage and PfE Policy JP-P2

3.5 Core Strategy policy P2 and PfE policy JP-P2 require developments to conserve, enhance and positively respond to the significance of heritage assets and their settings, using high-quality design that reinforces local character and delivers wider environmental, social and economic benefits

3.6 Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

CS Policy P3 - Improving Design of New Development and Supplementary Planning Document 'Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development'

3.7 This policy, along with the NPPF and PfE, seeks high quality design in all new developments.

CS Policies C1 and C3 – Delivering the right amount of housing in the right places & Delivering the right type of housing and PfE Policy JP-H3

3.8 These policies seek to deliver high-quality, well-designed housing that provides an appropriate mix of homes to meet local needs and supports sustainable communities. Residential development is supported where it is located in sustainable locations, respects the character of the surrounding area, protects residential amenity, and contributes to the borough's overall housing and regeneration objectives.

CS Policy G2 - Energy and new development and PfE Policy JP-S1

3.9 This policy seeks to ensure that new development in Rochdale contributes to reducing carbon emissions, increasing energy efficiency, and helping address climate change. It sets out obligations on new buildings and developments around how energy should be managed and how design, technology, and location can reduce environmental impact.

3.10 PfE policy JP-S1 seeks:

“To help tackle climate change, development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts, utilise sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives.”

CS Policy G4 - Protecting Green Belt Land, saved UDP Policy G/D/2 – Green Belt and PfE Policy JP-G9

3.11 The application site is located within the Green Belt where development is restricted to those types of development deemed appropriate by national planning policies, unless very special circumstances, which outweigh the potential ‘harm’, can be demonstrated.

3.12 Local and national planning policy also supports limited infilling and redevelopment where proposals maintain beneficial uses and do not harm the character and openness of the Green Belt.

CS Policy G8 – Drainage and Flood Risk & saved UDP Policy EM/7 – Development and Flood Risk and PfE Policy JP-S4

3.13 The purpose of these policies, along with advice contained within the PfE, is to ensure that new development is steered away from areas at high risk of flooding and that proposed development will not increase flood risk. Design must incorporate water management features such as sustainable urban drainage systems.

CS Policy DM1 – General Development Requirements

3.14 This policy sets out general criteria that all new development proposals must satisfy to ensure sustainable, high-quality, well-managed growth across the borough.

3.15 Policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan DPD aims to prevent the unnecessary sterilisation of valuable mineral resources by ensuring that minerals are extracted before non-mineral development takes place, where appropriate.

3.16 Non-mineral development that does not provide for prior extraction will only be permitted where one or more of the following applies:

- the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard and extract the mineral;
- prior extraction is not environmentally acceptable or economically viable;
- the mineral is not present, has no economic value, or is too deep to be practicably extracted; or
- the proposal is limited or temporary and would not prevent future mineral extraction

4.0 Planning Policy Compliance

4.1 Pre-application advice on the principle of the extension and conversion of the building to a dwelling was sought prior to the submitted scheme being finalised.

Principle of the development

4.2 Paragraph 154 states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate. However, there are several exceptions to this including:

“c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction”.

4.3 The stable building and land to the north are previously developed in nature. The Council's refusal of the 2017 application for a lawful development certificate concluded that the building falls outside the residential curtilage of Fern Hill Farm. The construction of the stable building commenced following the granting of planning permission 06/D48316 in 2007 and, although not fully completed due to the absence of stable doors, etc, was constructed sufficiently in line with the approved plans to be considered lawful.

4.4 The land is bounded by fencing with a clear separation between the site and the open land beyond and is not open in character. Furthermore, the land and building have an established use being accessed on a daily basis by the applicants for the parking of their vehicles and general storage purposes.

4.5 The proposal engages three separate but mutually reinforcing Green Belt exceptions within NPPF paragraph 154. Firstly, under criterion c), the works comprise the extension and alteration of an existing building and the amended scheme has been reduced and simplified so that the additions read as a subordinate continuation of the stable rather than as a new, competing built form. Secondly, under criterion g), the proposal involves the re-use and redevelopment of previously developed land, including a material change of use to residential, and would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Thirdly,

under criterion h)(iv), the development re-uses a building of permanent and substantial construction and preserves openness when considered in the context of the existing built form, enclosed site characteristics and surrounding landscape.

4.6 In relation to criterion h), the stable is a durable stone building with a slate roof and is plainly capable of conversion without wholesale reconstruction. The scheme therefore makes efficient use of an existing rural building, retaining its principal fabric and limiting new construction to that required to achieve a viable, accessible dwelling. The proposal would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt: it would not contribute to urban sprawl, would not result in neighbouring settlements merging, would not undermine the setting of a historic town and would continue to recycle an existing developed site rather than place pressure on undeveloped land elsewhere.

4.7 The development is therefore acceptable in principle when assessed against Core Strategy Policy G4, saved UDP Policy G/D/2, PfE Policy JP-G9 and the NPPF. The key policy tests are met as the proposal re-uses an established building, remains within a contained and previously developed part of the site, does not cause significant harm to openness and is supported by design and landscape mitigation that responds directly to the site's Green Belt sensitivity.

The proportionate nature of the proposed extensions

4.8 Rochdale's Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD advises that, in Green Belt locations, extensions resulting in an increase of up to 35% in floorspace or volume above that of the original dwelling will generally be regarded as appropriate and not disproportionate. This calculation includes any previous extensions to the original building, defined as the dwelling as first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948. The SPD also recognises that the characteristics of individual properties and proposals can vary considerably; accordingly, there may be circumstances where an increase of 35% is considered disproportionate, and others where an increase above 35% may still be regarded as proportionate.

4.9 The external floor area of the original building, not including the external canopy, is 90.70m² and 115m² including the canopy. The volume of the original building and canopy is 408.70m³.

4.10 The external floor area of the proposed dwelling is 164m² and the volume is 568m³.

4.11 The proposed extension would equate to a 42% increase in floor area and a 39% increase in volume in comparison to the original building, which exceeds the guideline of 35% set out within the SPD. The term disproportionate is not defined within the Framework, Core Strategy or SPD and it is acknowledged that volume and floor space calculations alone do not determine whether the extensions to the building would be disproportionate and it is understood that there is a visual element to this.

4.12 The planning officer's pre-application response concluded that the proposed extension would not appear wholly visually disproportionate to the original building due to it being single storey height but considered that the design emphasised the increase in massing and bulk to the front elevation.

4.13 The proposed extension has been reduced in response to the pre-application advice and the overall design amended significantly to reduce the prominence of the front elevation and appear more proportionate to the host building.

4.14 When the proposal is assessed as a whole, rather than only by reference to numerical uplift alone, the extension is proportionate to the host building and to its Green Belt setting. The scheme retains the existing ridge height, places the new ridge lower than the original roof form, reduces the apparent bulk of the previously discussed L-shaped arrangement, removes unnecessary vertical features and uses matching stone and slate so that the development remains visually recessive. The modest exceedance of the SPD's 35% guideline is therefore outweighed by the qualitative design factors that reduce perceived scale, massing and spatial impact. The proposal accords with the purpose of the SPD, Core Strategy Policy P3 and PfE Policy JP-H3 by delivering a compact, high-quality and contextually responsive dwelling.

Impact on the openness of the Green Belt

4.15 As stated above, the site is not open in character due to the presence of the substantial stable building and the hardstanding to its frontage, along with its use for storage and other activities by the applicants.

4.16 The site lies within a natural hollow within the landscape and as a result has limited visibility from the south, east and west. The presence of the mature trees and vegetation also serve to screen the existing building and use of the land. The trees around the site will be retained and supplemented with the planting of native tree species as shown on the proposed landscaping plan. The site is visible at long-range from the open land to the north. However, due to the low profile design of the proposed development and the fact that the site already contains built development, it is unlikely that the impact of the proposed dwelling will be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the Green Belt. The wildflower and grass planting will serve to further soften the visual impact of the development.

4.17 The curtilage of the proposed dwelling has been kept to that of the existing building and will not encroach on open land. Attractive, natural landscaping has been included at the request of the applicants who wish to create a peaceful outdoor space that extends from the interior of the dwelling through the glazing. The parking of vehicles immediately to the east of the dwelling will not appear intrusive.

4.18 In assessing the pre-application enquiry the planning officer commented:

“The site is located in an enclosed valley, nestled within a sunken area surrounded by rolling hills to the north and south. Mature trees are located on both the east and west sides of the building, effectively restricting long-range views of the site and the existing building, which features a relatively low roof height of approximately 4.6m. Nevertheless, because a Public Right of Way passes along the northern border, visibility from public vantage points remains high, and views of the site can also be appreciated from the neighbouring properties on Fern Hill Lane.

The proposed extension, as concluded above, would increase the size of the building by over 35% of its original volume and footprint. While not sprawling, this represents a clear increase in the spatial extent of development and built form and therefore I would consider the spatial impact to be moderate.

The extension largely replicates the form and massing of the existing building, though seeks to create a more dominant L-shaped footprint. New garden and parking areas are also to be created. I would not consider the new built form to be overly sprawling and new tree planting will offer some mitigation, however changes in the activity, lighting and residential paraphernalia on the site, will alter the character of the site and create new visual impacts, resulting in moderate harm. I do note that the plot is positioned in a valley location enclosed by hills and mature trees, where long-ranging views are restricted; however, visibility from the Public Right of Way and nearby properties means localised visual impacts will still occur.

On balance, the harm to openness is assessed as not substantial, but more than minimal, due to the combination of increased built form and strong localised visual impacts from the proposed material change of use. The proposal would therefore constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

Suggested mitigation measures, used cumulatively, could include: a reduction in the extension size, a lower ridge height or more compact form. These alterations could potentially lessen the degree of harm and allow for a more favourable consideration under exception C and H of the NPPF.”

4.19 The amended scheme responds directly to the officer’s concerns and materially reduces the degree of Green Belt impact identified at pre-application stage. The reduction in scale and volume, removal of the chimney, lower and simplified roof form, more compact plan and softer landscape treatment all lessen both the spatial and visual dimensions of openness. In particular, the development would be read against the existing stable building and the established cluster of built form at Fern Hill, rather than extending development into the wider open countryside. The proposal therefore falls well below the NPPF paragraph 154(g) threshold of substantial harm to openness and is capable of being supported under the relevant Green Belt exceptions.

4.20 For the above reasons, any residual impact on Green Belt openness would be limited, localised and effectively mitigated. The development preserves the essential open character of the wider Green Belt, avoids encroachment beyond the defined and enclosed site, and would not undermine any of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. It is therefore compliant with Core Strategy Policy G4, saved UDP Policy G/D/2, PfE Policy JP-G9 and national Green Belt policy.

Sustainable Design and Amenity

4.21 Core Strategy policies P1 and P3 require all new developments to achieve a high standard of design. Policy DM1 sets out a list of criteria which all development proposals should meet, including the expectation for high quality design.

4.22 The NPPF also requires new development to be of a high standard of design which makes a positive contribution to the quality of the area through quality architecture and the creation of a strong sense of place.

4.23 Following a thorough site assessment and discussions with the applicants following receipt of the pre-application advice, detailed plans have been prepared by CJ Partnership Environmental Architects which demonstrate a clear understanding of the site's context and sensitivity towards the rural location. The Urban Design officer's comments included within the pre-application advice have been taken into account and the architect has had follow-up discussions with the UDO to fully explore the design options.

4.24 Small areas of hard landscaping in natural York stone combine with the dry-stone perimeter walls and native species trees/hedgerows to create a compact and natural interface with the wider landscape.

4.25 A Design Statement has been prepared by the CJ Partnership and is submitted with the application.

4.26 The proposed extension presents an ideal opportunity to apply a fabric-first approach to sustainable design, improving the thermal performance and long-term efficiency of the building while retaining and adapting existing fabric. The re-use of the stable reduces the need for wholly new construction, limits embodied carbon and supports the objectives of Core Strategy Policy G2 and PfE Policy JP-S1 by securing environmental, social and practical benefits from an already developed rural site.

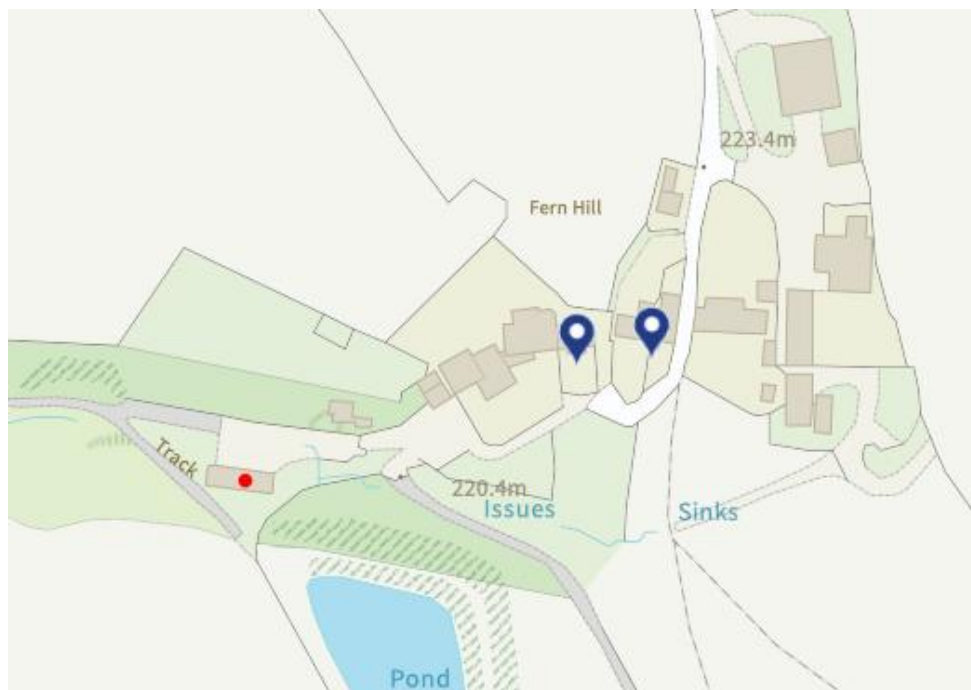
4.27 The purpose of the development is to provide high-quality, accessible, single-storey accommodation for the applicants, enabling them to downsize while remaining within the settled community of which they are an established part. The proposal also releases their existing larger family dwelling back into the local housing stock and therefore contributes positively to housing choice. In policy terms, the scheme accords with Core Strategy Policies C1, C3, P3 and DM1 and PfE Policy JP-H3 because it delivers a well-designed, appropriately

sized home that responds to an identified need, respects local character, safeguards neighbouring amenity and makes effective use of an existing developed site.

4.28 The existing access arrangements will be utilised and the access to the surrounding land, and the Public Right of Way that runs through the site, will be unaffected.

Impact on the nearby Grade II listed buildings

4.29 There are two Grade II listed buildings within the settlement at Fern Hill.



Extract from Historic England website showing the application site (red dot) and the listed buildings to the east (blue markers)

4.30 Fern Hill Cottage and Fern Hill First Farmhouse were both first listed in October 1951 with an amendment to the listings having taken place in February 1985.

4.31 The Historic England listing description of Fern Hill Cottage reads:

“Cottage. Early C18. Coursed rubble with stone dressings and stone slate roof. 2-unit plan with 2 storeys and a large central entrance porch. Stone plinth and quoins. The windows have flush chamfered mullions although most have been removed. The ground floor formerly had a 2-light window to the left. a 5-light to the right; the first floor 4-light and 3-light. The porch has an off-centre door with heavy chamfered stone surround and a gable with central owl-hole and kneelers. The rear and side-walls have been completely re-built and have C20 casement windows.”

4.32 The Historic England listing description of Fern Hill First Farmhouse reads:

"Farmhouse. C18, with older wing "IMC: 1691" (John and M. Crossley) on door lintel. Coursed rubble with stone dressings and stone slate roof. 2-unit house of C18 date with central entrance is built adjoining the C17 cross- passage and cross-wing which is of 2 storeys and 2 rooms deep with a steep stone stair rising between them. The 2- bay C18 section formerly had 2 square cut flush mullioned windows to each floor although no mullions still exist and doorway has square-cut jambs and lintel. To the right is the projecting single storey porch with accentuated ogee shaped enriched lintel and round panel above: L coped gable and kneelers. The crosswing has a stone plinth and quoins, one 3-light double chamfered mullion window with hoodmould to each floor. The upper was formerly of 5 lights, the lower of 4, one being removed to insert a later door. Coped gable and kneelers. The rear has three 2 and 3-light windows with plain hoodmoulds."

4.33 Whilst 20th century replacement windows and re-building works to the rear and side walls of Fern Hill Cottage have had a negative impact, the significance of the listed buildings is considered to be high due to their surviving architectural features and historic fabric which are examples of rural domestic and agricultural architecture of the early 18th century in the Rochdale/Pennine area.

4.34 The proposed development will be sited well away from the listed buildings and their immediate curtilage, separated by mature trees which will provide natural screening. As such, the proposed development is not considered to be within the setting of the heritage assets and will have a neutral impact upon their significance. The Council's conservation officer agreed with this during the pre-application enquiry.

Drainage and Flood Risk

4.35 The site is not located within an area identified on the Proposals Map as being at risk from flooding and the Environment Agency maps show the site as falling within Flood Zone 1 where there is a low probability of flooding from local watercourses. Part of the land to the north and east of the proposed dwelling is shown to be at risk of flooding from surface water.

4.36 A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been prepared and accompanies the application.

Biodiversity

4.37 As this is a self-build development, the proposal is exempt from the requirement to demonstrate Biodiversity Net Gain. A Biodiversity Net Gain Certificate of Exemption is submitted with the application. However, on-site enhancements will be provided including bird and bat boxes and hedgehog highways.

4.38 A bat and nesting bird survey has been carried out by Echo Calls Ltd, the report of which forms part of the application submission.

Minerals

4.39 The application site lies within a Sandstone Mineral Safeguarding Area and, as such, Policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan is applicable. Criterion 1 of Policy 8 permits non-mineral development where the need for the development outweighs the need to extract the mineral.

4.40 In this case, there is a clear and demonstrable need for the proposed development. The proposal comprises a self-build dwelling specifically designed to provide single-storey accommodation to meet the applicants' needs. The provision of accessible accommodation will enable the applicant to occupy a home that is appropriate to their current and future requirements, delivering significant social and personal benefits that cannot readily be achieved through the existing use of the site.

4.41 Whilst the site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area for sandstone, the designation identifies the presence of a potentially valuable mineral resource rather than land that is allocated or expected to be worked. There is no planning permission, allocation or known proposal for sandstone extraction on the site, nor is there evidence that the underlying resource is of sufficient quality, quantity or economic viability to justify commercial extraction. The proposal relates to a relatively small site currently occupied by stables, which further limits the realistic prospect of viable mineral working.

4.42 In these circumstances, the immediate and tangible benefits of providing an accessible self-build home to meet the applicants' identified accommodation needs clearly outweigh the speculative and unproven potential for future sandstone extraction. The proposal is small-scale, relates to land already occupied by built development and would not prejudice any realistic wider mineral working opportunity. It therefore satisfies criterion 1 of Policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan and does not give rise to a mineral safeguarding objection.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The proposed development represents a high-quality, sustainable and policy-compliant conversion and extension of an existing stable building within a contained part of the Green Belt. The scheme satisfies the relevant exceptions in NPPF paragraph 154 due to its re-use of a permanent and substantial building, involves limited and proportionate additions, redevelops previously developed land and would not cause substantial harm to openness. The siting, scale, reduced massing, retained low roof profile and comprehensive landscaping ensure that any residual impact on the character and openness of the Green Belt would be limited and localised.

5.2 The proposal also delivers clear planning benefits. It provides an accessible self-build dwelling to meet the applicants' current and future needs, enables them to remain within their long-established community and releases a larger family dwelling back into the local housing stock. It secures the long-term beneficial re-use of an existing rural building and incorporates a fabric-first approach to sustainability. The development will enhance the immediate landscape setting through native planting, meadow grassland, dry stone walling and restrained hard surfacing to the benefit of the site and the surrounding area.

5.3 For these reasons, the development accords with the relevant policies of the Core Strategy, saved UDP Policies, relevant PfE policies and policy 8 of the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan. The proposal is also consistent with the NPPF objectives of making effective use of land, achieving well-designed places, conserving the historic environment, addressing flood risk and protecting Green Belt openness and planning permission should therefore be granted.

June 2026