

significant revision. It was noted that, if brought forward unchanged as part of a full planning application, the design would not be regarded as being of a sufficiently high quality and could detract from the established local character. It was also advised: ‘ The designer should draw upon positive examples of the urban environment in the area, and look to reinterpret interesting architectural features that help create a positive architectural language ...for example with decorative doors, projecting bay windows, chimneys, arched windows and lintels, deep recesses etc.’

RPA and BNG

I am content to allow the case officer to reach an informed judgement on matters relating to tree root protection and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) affecting the site. However, should any amendments to the proposal be required as a result of these considerations, I would request that I am re-consulted on the revised scheme before a decision is made.

Design Policy

Rochdale’s Core Strategy (Policy DM1) places strong emphasis on high-quality design that responds positively to its context and enhances the built environment. Developments should reflect the best design principles in their form, materials, and architectural detailing. It also calls for all new developments to respond positively to their context, integrating seamlessly with the local character and enhancing the area's identity.

The Oldham and Rochdale Urban Design Guide - Ensure that new development will positively improve the appearance and character of the site in its setting, creating a new quality benchmark for further development in the immediate locality.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets an expectation that good quality design will be approved while poor quality will be rejected. Good design should not just be for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

The Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan requires developments to demonstrate good design by creating visual interest in areas or buildings lacking character.

DESIGN

Tree Frontage

The trees lining Egerton Street are a key part of the area's character, providing valuable greenery and contributing positively to the street scene. However, their presence is also likely to leave much of the proposed development in shade, which could impact residential amenity and may give rise to future concerns from occupants.

Boundary Treatments

Boundary treatments to the front of houses would be better (and easier) with a low brick wall in the same brickwork as the facing brick for the dwelling elevations. The gate could still be metal and this would be more reflective of the original front boundary walls to Walker Street.

Parking

The visual amenity experienced by existing residents of Holly Oak Gardens will inevitably be less favourable than under the current undeveloped scenario. However, the proposed arrangement represents a significant improvement compared with the scheme presented at the pre-application stage. Furthermore, locating

parking away from the frontage of the new plots creates a less cluttered streetscene, resulting in a more attractive and coherent development.

Scale

The site would be better suited to a two-storey form with a more generous floor-to-ceiling height, which would allow for improved proportions and a stronger approach to fenestration through the incorporation of larger windows.

It would be helpful to see the proposed elevation in the context of Walker Street to address concerns that an excessive proportion of the building may be given over to the roofscape, and to allow a comparison of window sizes and overall proportions with the surrounding terrace.

In any event, the eaves and ridge heights should not exceed those of the existing terrace roofline, in order to maintain a sympathetic relationship with the established street scene.

Materials / Architectural detailing

The immediate context is generally of a good quality and provides strong precedents for architectural detailing, material selection and façade articulation. Whilst the proposal makes some reference to these characteristics, the response currently feels relatively superficial and lacks a thorough exploration of the opportunities presented by the surrounding townscape.

There is scope to draw more meaningfully from local features to create a more distinctive and contextual design. Without further refinement, the proposal risks appearing generic and, ultimately, lowering the overall quality of development within the area rather than reinforcing and enhancing its character. The improvements suggested below would enhance the proposal's relationship with its context and architectural quality.

It is worth noting some of the detail shown in the CGI are not fully labelled in the elevation drawings or are shown differently i.e. bay window materiality, brick reveal depth at entrances etc.

1. The area is characterised by large ground floor stone bay windows. The proposal presents a simplified interpretation of this feature, appearing to rely on darker-coloured uPVC (likely anthracite), a material and finish that has not always aged well within the borough. In contrast, these terraced rows demonstrate how traditional materials can weather gracefully and contribute positively to the long-term character of the area.

Improvement proposed: Stonework at bay window surrounds. Reconsider colour palette.

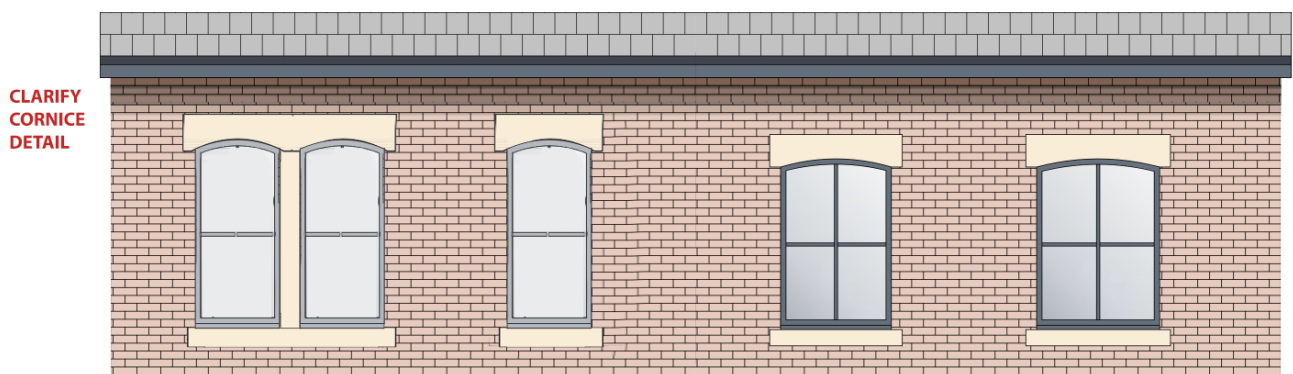
2. The entrances would benefit from greater emphasis and articulation. They need not be as elaborate as those on Egerton Crescent, but even a simple recess or brick detailing around the opening would add interest. Simply assorting door colours does not demonstrate a contextual response. Enhancing the entrance design would help avoid a generic, lower-quality appearance and create a stronger sense of arrival.

Improvement proposed: Add some further interest to the entrance.



3. Differentiate the fenestration at upper floor levels. The 'farmhouse/ centre bar' style window does not quite work either

Improvement proposed: Take inspiration from Egerton Crescent i.e. double window could be to the bedroom and a narrow window could be to the landing such as example below



4. The designer has attempted to add some visual interest to the side elevations but this is still lacking. There is an attractive gable elevation example along Egerton Street (pictured) that demonstrates how to avoid blank, uninteresting gable elevations. The designer should ensure that gable elevations demonstrate sufficient visual interest and this can be done with windows, detailing, introducing depth etc. Improvement proposed: Clarify what the brick recess detail is for these side elevations. Look to supplement this with projecting part of the elevation out as per the example or add further brick detailing to the ground floor (particularly relevant for Plot 4).



Materials

The current proposal incorporates uPVC windows, doors and a tiled roof. In the context of the immediate surroundings and the design policies outlined above, these materials would not be considered to achieve a high-quality design outcome.

Steer away from colours such as anthracite grey and black as these have quite mixed success across the borough. Lighter tone colour would work and sit within the context more successfully.

There is an expectation that high-quality materials will be used, including natural stone and slate. Should the proposal be considered acceptable, I would recommend that the officer secure a sample panel to demonstrate the quality and appearance of the brickwork, mortar, stone detailing, windows and roof materials.

Further work

Further detail should be provided on the proposed brick detailing, including reveal depths and opening treatments, to ensure the design intent is clear and not left open to interpretation at a later stage.

Brick walls should be faced in the same facing brick for the dwellings unless agreed with the case officer. We would expect some level of detailing and attractive capping to the taller brick wall / piers which can be agreed via condition.

Please consult again if amendments are made.