

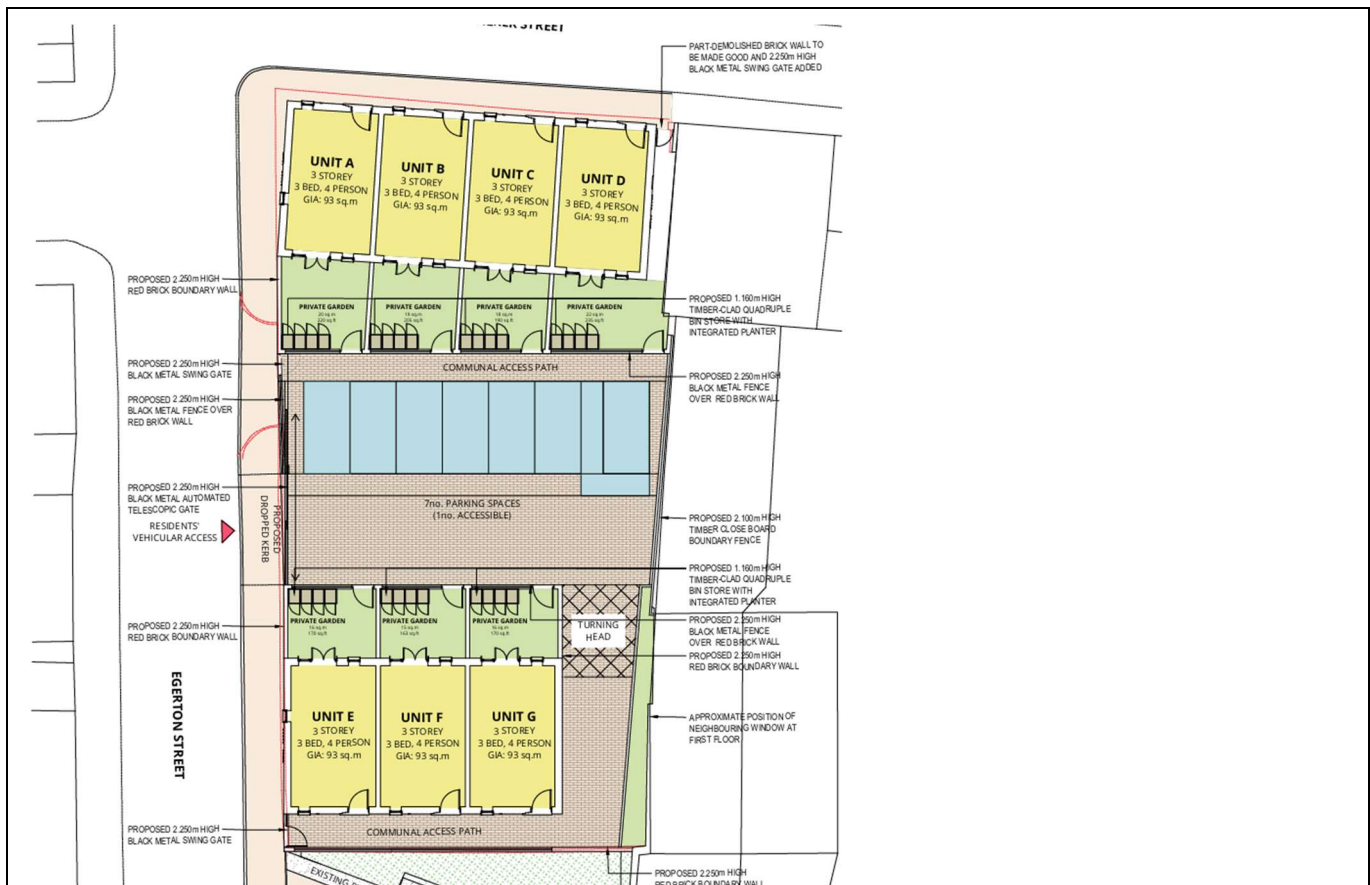
URBAN DESIGN CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Design Officer	Azhar Kapadi
Date	Set 2 Comments 11.08.26 Original Comments 20.05.26
Application Reference	PL/2026/0196
Address	Land at Egerton Street (Former New Jerusalem Church), Middleton, M24 4QD
Proposal	Erection of seven residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated access works including formation of a new dropped kerb, parking, bin storage, landscaping and private amenity space.

Reason(s) for Consultation

Building design and materiality

Scheme Image(s)



Source: Application submission

Assessment

This assessment has been made against:

National Guidance:

- The National Planning Policy Framework
- The ten characteristics of a well-designed place contained within the National Design Guide
- National Model Design Code
- Building for a Healthy Life design toolkit

Local Policy:

- Rochdale Core Strategy policies:
- S03 – To improve design, image and quality of place
- P1 – Improving Image
- P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- P3 – Improving design of new development
- DMI (General Development Requirements)

Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Oldham and Rochdale Urban Design Guide
- Oldham and Rochdale Residential Design Guide

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

- G/BE/1 - Design Quality
- BE/2 - Design Criteria for New Development

Greater Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide

Places for Everyone (PfE) joint development plan

SUMMARY

Whilst I remain unconvinced by the overall design approach, particularly in terms of its layout, architectural quality, and response to context, there are a number of improvements that should be sought if the scheme is to progress.

TO BE READ ALONGSIDE DESIGN ANNOTATIONS SHEET – attached to the end of this document

POLICY

Policy P3 of the Core Strategy acknowledges that good design will improve the image and attractiveness of the borough as a place to live, work and visit. This policy requires all new developments to adhere to high quality design and enhance the borough's identity and sense of place, by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general.

The Oldham & Rochdale Urban Design Guide states that 'poor designs are unacceptable wherever they may be proposed'. This aligns with the NPPF requirement for new development to improve the character and quality of an area.

Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan BE/2:

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

Context

Refer to original consultation response for comments on general design principles, many of which still apply to the current iteration. A lot of design assistance was provided and it is disappointing to see the proposal has not progressed in design terms.

Boundary Treatments

I would recommend the following amendments:

- Reduce boundary wall heights to 1.8m.
- Ensure all boundary walls incorporate a coping stone or similarly robust capping detail.
- Introduce brick detailing, patterning, or decorative brickwork to provide visual interest and avoid long expanses of featureless masonry.
- Refine boundary treatments to improve their relationship with the public realm and surrounding character.

Visual interest to boundary walls does not need to be complex or expensive



Elevations

Generally, the elevations currently read as very flat. Aside from the stepped detailing around the entrance door, there is little depth or articulation. The proposed doorway detail also requires clarification, as the current plans do not appear to accommodate it properly. To achieve the arrangement shown, either a thicker external wall construction or a corresponding internal step would likely be required.

My initial recommendation would be to introduce stone cills and lintels to reflect the established character of the surrounding area. However, it appears the applicant is pursuing a specific window profile system. My concern is that, unless a significant investment is made in the detailing and material quality, the finished result could appear contrived or of a lower quality than intended.

The examples referenced within the Design and Access Statement draw on strong Cambridge precedents, but these schemes rely heavily on high-quality precast stone detailing. There is a notable gulf between that level of execution and what is currently proposed. Unless comparable quality can be secured through detailed design, conditions, or sample approvals, I would favour a more traditional approach incorporating stone cills and lintels, which would better reflect local character and be more likely to achieve a successful outcome. The Tower Street scheme provides a useful example of lower-end budget for affordable housing and the product has not manifested as envisaged. I would ensure that the quality of the product is ensured through specification and samples (precast profiled stone expected) otherwise opt for a more traditional window with deep reveals and corresponding cills and stones.



The Tower St scheme for supported care living affordable housing shows the challenges of lower quality materials and lack of architectural detailing. The solar panels in the roof should be integrated (see below)



Gable Elevations

As noted previously, the two brick gables are particularly prominent features of the development, giving rise to a frontage along Egerton Street. I would strongly suggest improving the brick articulation and introducing additional visual interest to these elevations. The boundary treatments should also be refined to provide a more considered and robust response.

Roof

In my previous comments, I noted:

'The roofscape will be highly visible and is therefore an important element of the design. There is currently a considerable amount of visual activity at roof level, and I question whether the proposed dormers are appropriate.'

Dormers

This is a relatively unusual context in that dormers are actually quite uncommon within the immediate area. Despite being located to the rear they are still quite prominent.

Consequently, I would encourage the applicant to reduce their visual impact through slimmer profiles and more restrained detailing. This would help avoid the over-dominance of the newly introduced aluminium-clad dormers and align the scheme more closely with the precedents presented within the Design and Access Statement.

Solar Panels

An integrated solar panel system should be integrated within the roof, particularly considering how busy the roof is.

Chimneys

The absence of chimneys is disappointing, particularly given their strong presence within the surrounding context. Previous iterations of the design also incorporated chimneys, which makes their omission more noticeable. Reintroduce these.

More generally, I am concerned that in attempting to resolve the site's layout constraints, the designer has moved away from several of the original design principles and contextual references that initially helped justify the scheme.

Materials

High-quality materials are expected throughout the scheme, including natural slate roofing and high-quality brickwork, which can be secured via condition (submission of samples).

As a minimum, I would expect a sample panel (on site) to be constructed for approval. This should include the proposed brickwork, detailing, and particularly the dormer materials and finishes, which require careful scrutiny given their prominence and current design.

Specifications and detailed design on all boundary wall treatments should be secured by condition.

Summary

Whilst I remain unconvinced by the overall design approach, there are a number of improvements that should be sought if the scheme is to progress. At the very least, greater attention should be given to elevational articulation, contextual detailing, roofscape design, material quality, boundary treatments, and the integration of sustainability measures. These changes would help ensure the proposal responds more positively to its surroundings and delivers a higher-quality development than what is currently shown.

12.08.26

DRAWING TO BE READ IN COLOUR



Unpleasant and visually uninteresting side elevations - quite prominent. Simplify as shown with stepped brickwork- Unlikely to have cost impact. Further interest to gables on the street side.



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If in the background it
needs to be shown as the
background

Boundary treatments make this look like rear gardens. Better detailing and materiality needs to be ensured. Lower wall height. Why the sudden change from open to solid wall?

Project - Organisation - Volume/System - Level - Type - Role - Number
2913-URB-ZZ-XX-DR-A-208250