

Proposed residential development at Former Oakenrod Primary School site, Bury Road, Rochdale by Stonebond Properties (Manchester) Limited.

1. Introduction

I am a self-employed independent Crime Prevention Design Consultant who provides advice to designers, architects, and property developers to design out crime and the potential for crime in new developments of varying types and sizes, cognizant of the National Planning Policy Framework, and by way of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, and Secured by Design principles. I have been actively involved in crime prevention for over 40 years, both as a serving police officer, and prior to retirement as the Force Architectural Liaison Officer for Merseyside Police, being Home Office accredited. I also hold a professional qualification, i.e. Advanced Certificate in Environmental Design and Crime Prevention (Ad Cert ED&CP) from Oxford Brookes University and licentiate membership of the City and Guilds Institute (LCGI). I have previously provided advice for a number of planning application within the Rochdale Borough Council area by way of Crime Impact Statements (CIS).

Planning permission has been granted at the above site in May 2026 for up to 52 dwellings under Application **22/01068/FUL**, subject to conditions.

Condition 19 states: *'The development hereby approved shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the recommendations and specifications set out in sections 3 and 4 of Crime Impact Statement, ref.2022/0092/CIS/01, Version A dated 22.04.22, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the agreed measures shall be retained and maintained thereafter.'*

Reason: In the interests of crime prevention and community safety, having regard to Core Strategy Policy and the National Planning policy Framework.'

A Section 73 application to amend the scheme is being submitted and I have now been asked to provide an appraisal of the previously submitted and accepted CIS (*attached at Appendix 1*), and comment on the amended layout of the proposed development.

2. Previous Assessment

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) assessed the planning application against the principles of 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED), in order to reduce the opportunities for crime and the fear of crime. The proposed scheme was found to be acceptable, and they stated the application would be supported.

Sections 3 and 4 of the CIS related to Layout Appraisal and Physical Security, although it should be noted that the normal course of action by GMP is to make prescriptive recommendations in regard to Physical Security testing standards, which would allow for the formal award of Secured by Design (SBD) accreditation on completion of the development. There is no desire on the part of the applicant for such accreditation, nor are they obliged to achieve it through Condition 19; however, they will ensure that the development complies with the principles of SBD as is the requirement contained within Local Planning Policy, and Approved Document Q (ADQ).

3. Current Assessment

The amended layout is now assessed against the previous recommendations, albeit this has now changed from that previously appraised by GMP, and now comprises of 46 no. units including detached, semi-detached and terraced style properties, car parking, associated landscaping and public open space (POS), SuDS attenuation basin and Foul Water Pumping Station.

The overall aim is to achieve a suitable and sensible level of security for the entire site including building shells, and to introduce appropriate design features that enable natural surveillance and create a sense of ownership and responsibility for every part of the development in order to deter criminal and anti-social behaviour. The crime prevention measures therefore recommended comply with the ARC principle in that they are appropriate, realistic, and cost effective for such a proposed development.

The proposed development site sits lower than Bury Road, sloping down from north to south to the River Roch. Vehicular and pedestrian access will be from Bury Road at the eastern end of the site (in the same configuration as approved) and dwellings will be laid out overlooking the street and parking spaces which will aid security and increase surveillance opportunities by way of providing active frontages to the properties. Pedestrian and vehicular routes around the development will be well defined by way of pavements and shared surface treatments and be as straight as possible to prevent hiding places. Where roads, shared driveways, parking spaces etc. border POS, low timber knee rail or strong landscaping treatments should form the separation, and the following recommendations should also be included:

Boundary treatments

- The northern site boundary on Bury Road currently comprises a mix of metal railings brick walling, metal palisade fencing, trees and dense shrubbery. The existing metal railings along Bury Road will be retained. Plots inside this will sit lower, backing onto or side onto the landscaped embankment, so their rear gardens, including the rear access path to Plot 12, should be enclosed by way of a minimum 1.8m high concrete post and close boarded timber fencing. The landscaped area between plots and Bury Road is steep and generally inaccessible but well overlooked from Bury Road which will act as a deterrent for crime. The timber panels should also be fixed so as to prevent lifting and unauthorised access into these gardens. Low timber knee rail should provide the definition between car parking spaces and the landscaped area, and the Foul Water Pumping Station should be fenced off so as to prevent unauthorised access.
- The western boundary with Melrose Street and an Electrical Distribution site currently consists of trees and dense shrubbery, which it is anticipated will remain, with plots set well back and backing onto this. Rear gardens will be enclosed by 1.8m high concrete post and close boarded timber fencing atop retaining walling. Panels should again be fixed.
- The southern boundary borders the River Roch and will remain unchanged. Plots will be set well back from this backing onto POS, existing wetland, dense woodland, and a proposed attenuation basin. Rear gardens will again be enclosed by 1.8m high concrete post and close boarded timber fencing atop retaining walling, the height of which is significant in preventing any potential access to rear gardens from this area.
- The eastern boundary bordering nos. 209-219 Bury Road will also remain unchanged, with the site access road running inside this. The north eastern perimeter will wrap around an open parking area outside of the site but accessed from the new site access road.

Physical security measures

- Approved Document Q (ADQ), which SBD has welcomed as it introduces a security element into the Building Regulations, applies to all new dwellings and creates security requirements in relation to doors at the entrance to a building, including ground floor, basement, and other easily accessible windows; and any easily accessible roof-lights. The requirement is that the product must be shown to have been manufactured to a design that has been tested to an acceptable security standard. In this instance, doors should ideally meet SBD standard PAS 24/LPS 1175 or ADQ as a minimum and be fitted with multipoint locking systems including anti-bump, anti-pick cylinders or equivalent. Windows should be internally beaded and fitted with lockable handles and restrictors. Safety glass, laminated or toughened, should be fitted in any glazed window panels below 800mm and glazed door panels within 1.5m of finished floor level. All these measures would be adequate for the crime risk identified.

Landscaping and external issues

- Rear and sub-divisional fencing to gardens will be 1.8m high concrete post and close boarded timber fencing, as per SBD guidelines, and as previously recommended, the timber panels should also be fixed so as to prevent lifting and unauthorised access into these gardens.
- Wherever possible, front gardens should be landscaped by way of low ornamental hedgerow/shrubs at the back of pavement in order to define defensible space, ownership, and allow for dwelling frontages to be open to view as per SBD guidelines.
- Where rear or side gardens abut the highway within the development, they will be enclosed behind 600mm high walling with 1.2m timber fence panels which should be fixed with the outside face of the wall so as to prevent climbing. Any long expanses of walling/fencing should be further protected by 'defensive' shrub planting to prevent anti-social behaviour whilst also softening the appearance. Defensive planting such as thorny shrubs can help prevent crime, anti-social behaviour, graffiti and loitering.
- Any trees within the front gardens of properties should be pruned up to a minimum height of 2m thereby maintaining a clear field of vision around the site, and trees should not mask lighting columns nor become climbing aids into rear gardens. Any other shrub planting around the site should not impede the opportunity for natural surveillance and wayfinding and should avoid the creation of potential hiding places.
- Car parking in the main will be in curtilage, in spaces at the front or side of plots, or on street, all overlooked from regularly inhabited 'active' rooms within dwellings. The exception to this is the rear parking court serving Plots 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10. Although rear parking courts are strongly advised against from a crime prevention perspective unless they are gated by way of an electronically operated gate(s), and because they provide access to the rear fences of a number of gardens and can become ASB hotspots, in this instance, the parking court is open, its entrance will be well overlooked from within the site, and the car park is also visible from Bury Road which has a high footfall of pedestrians and traffic.
- Access to rear gardens, including any rear access paths and gaps between plots, i.e. those serving Plots 13, 14, 15, 16, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45, should include self-locking and self-closing gates a minimum of 1.8m in height. The gates must be placed at the entrance to the rear access path, as near to the front building line as possible, and adjacent to the south west corner of the rear garden of Plot 27 so that attempts to climb them will be in full view of the street. This will also prevent unrestricted access into what effectively will be a rear entry/hiding place, which in turn could allow access to the rear fences of a number of gardens where criminals could operate unseen. This may necessitate the need for a shared locking gate where such paths are shared. Utility meters should ideally be accessible to the utility companies without the need to seek access from the householder as this removes the possibility of bogus official type offences. The fitting of Smart meters also removes the need for access.

- Good street lighting is essential for a number of reasons, not least in order to prevent crime and the fear of crime. Street lighting levels to adopted highways and footpaths should meet BS 5489-1:2020. Care should be taken when locating street lighting columns so that they do not become climbing aids, and they should be installed to provide the best spread of light without creating shadows. Lighting should not conflict with landscaping, be resistant to vandalism, and should also illuminate all front doors of dwellings, to allow for house number and caller identification in addition to enhancing natural surveillance
- Even though most home security systems are now wireless technology, a 13amp non-switched fused spur, as recommended by SBD, should also be installed in each dwelling. This will allow purchasers to choose whether or not they have an intruder alarm fitted and where it is located within the property, effectively removing the standardised location of wired systems within each individual property, frustrating both opportunist criminals and those who may have perhaps viewed properties when initially advertised for sale, in order to discover where that and other security measures are located.
- Bin storage will be located within the enclosed rear gardens thus avoiding the need for free-standing bin stores in front of the houses where they could provide potential hiding places and targets for criminal damage.
- Robust management of POS/communal amenity space is essential to encourage active use and enjoyment, whilst making abuse less likely to occur. Poor management and maintenance can lead to a downward spiral of neglect and loss of environmental quality, encouraging nuisance, vandalism, and other anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- A stepped footpath link is proposed between Plots 34 and 35, from within the residential aspect of the site to the POS between it and the river. The route will be straight, wide and well overlooked, but any planting alongside it should be maintained and of a height so as not to create hiding places, to reduce the fear of crime for legitimate users.
- The SuDS attenuation pond should include suitable fencing and safety signage if necessary.

4. Conclusion

The proposal as submitted will bring a long since cleared site into residential use and provide additional legitimate activity, natural surveillance and overlooking to the area at all times of the day and night.

All of the proposed dwellings will have habitable room windows to their front and some side elevations, maximising surveillance opportunities over the street, parking spaces, and gaps between plots, thus discouraging criminal activity.

The crime prevention measures recommended and proposed for this sustainable development are appropriate and adequate for the perceived crime risk and should satisfy the requirements of Rochdale Borough Council's local planning policies and strategy because they take into account the need to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and the fear of it, and the high quality design of the development will clearly create a sense of place that enables people to identify with their surroundings or locality, and hopefully be and feel safe, without creating a fortress type development due to the clearly defined and well-lit private and semi-private spaces and well defined routes which will benefit from natural surveillance.

I fully support the S73 application and believe that the amended layout and crime prevention advice provided would allow Condition 19 to be amended to ensure delivery of the development in accordance with the recommendations set out in this note.

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