

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0759
Location: PIKE FOLD, LIGHTOWLERS LANE, LITTLEBOROUGH, OL15 0LN
Proposal: Conversion of detached garage into ancillary living accommodation including alterations to fenestration and the installation of solar panels and roof lights
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The site relates to Pike Fold, a bungalow property off Lightowlers Lane, Littleborough. It benefits from a detached garage and large driveway. The property has a history of various extensions and alterations.

The site is located in the Green Belt and the Places for Everyone Landscape Character designation states the site is 'Open Moorlands and Enclosed Upland Fringes (West/South Pennines)'. The site is across Lightowlers Lane where a listed building is located; 'Former Winter Bee House at Pike Farm'.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the conversion of an existing detached garage to provide ancillary residential accommodation incidental to the occupation of Pike Fold. The development would involve internal alterations together with the installation of new windows and doors, rooflights, inset solar photovoltaic panels and associated masonry repairs. The building would remain unchanged in terms of its footprint, ridge height, scale and overall form.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY / PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

The proposal was the subject of pre-application discussions. The pre-application scheme sought the conversion of the garage to an annex involving a 600mm increase in roof height and the introduction of dormer extensions. The pre-application response identified concerns regarding the scale and prominence of the proposed dormers, the increased roof height and the relationship of the accommodation to the host dwelling. The current application has been amended significantly from the pre-application submission, removing the proposed roof enlargement and dormers. The submitted proposal now comprises the conversion of the existing building with relatively limited external alterations.

05/D44869: Erection Of Detached Double Garage. **Approved** May 2005.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Regional Guidance

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) 2024:

JP-S1 – Sustainable Development

JP-S2 – Carbon and Energy

JP-G8 – A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

JP-G9 – The Green Belt

JP-P1 – Sustainable Places

JP-P2 – Heritage

JP-C8 – Transport Requirements of New Development

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

SD1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

P2 – Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage

P3 – Improving Design of New Development

G7 – Increasing the Value of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

T1 – Delivering Sustainable Transport

T2 – Improving Accessibility

DM1 – General Development Requirements

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development SPD (2016)

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: 26/09/2026

Press Notice: 29/09/2026

Neighbour notification letters: 18/09/2026

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of representation has been received from a neighbouring resident. No objection is raised to the conversion itself. Concerns relate to the management of construction traffic, delivery vehicles and construction materials during the build phase and the potential impact on access along Lightowlers Lane and visibility at its junction with Halifax Road.

These concerns have been carefully considered. However, they relate to temporary construction activities rather than the planning merits of the completed development. The proposal would not result in any permanent impact on highway safety, access arrangements or visibility and is therefore considered acceptable in planning terms.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Conservation Officer: (Summary) No objections.

Highways: (Summary) No objections.

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development (Including Green Belt)

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development and advises that proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.

The application seeks permission for the conversion of an existing detached garage to provide ancillary residential accommodation associated with Pike Fold.

The site lies within the Green Belt. NPPF Policy GB6 confirms that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the exceptions identified within Policy GB7. Policy GB7(b) confirms that the alteration or reuse of an existing building is not inappropriate development provided that the building is of permanent and substantial construction and the development does not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the original building.

The proposal would not increase the footprint, ridge height, scale or massing of the building. The development comprises the conversion of the existing structure

through the insertion of windows, doors, rooflights and inset photovoltaic panels. Consequently, the proposal would not result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the building and would preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposed accommodation would comprise a bedroom, bathroom, lounge, dining area and kitchen. Whilst the level of accommodation would permit a high degree of day-to-day independence, this does not in itself establish the creation of a separate planning unit. Longstanding case law, including *Uttlesford DC v Secretary of State for the Environment and White* (1992) JPL 171, established that ancillary accommodation does not cease to be ancillary solely because it contains facilities for independent day-to-day living.

In this case, the building would remain within the domestic curtilage of Pike Fold and would continue to share the established site access, parking arrangements and external amenity areas associated with the principal dwelling. The accommodation would therefore remain physically and functionally associated with Pike Fold and would not constitute a separate dwellinghouse.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to represent an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt and complies with NPPF Policy GB7 and PfE Policy JP-G9.

Character, Appearance and Heritage

NPPF Policies DP3, HE4, HE5 and HE6 require development to respond positively to its context and conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

PfE Policy JP-P2 and CS Policy P2 similarly seek to conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings.

The application relates to the conversion of an existing detached garage constructed pursuant to a planning permission granted in 2005. The building already forms part of the established domestic curtilage of Pike Fold and is read as an ancillary domestic structure.

Externally, the proposal is limited to the insertion of new windows and doors, rooflights, inset photovoltaic panels and associated making good works. No extension is proposed and the building would retain its existing scale, footprint, roof form and overall appearance.

The application site lies within the wider setting of the Grade II listed former winter beehouse at Pike House. The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its historic function as a rare winter beehouse and the survival of the historic bee boles.

The proposal does not involve any works to the listed building itself and would not result in the loss of any historic fabric or features of special interest. The garage is a

modern building physically separated from the listed structure and there is no direct historic or functional relationship between the two buildings.

The Council's Conservation Officer has considered the proposal and confirms that, given the modern construction of the garage, the separation distance from the listed building and the minor nature of the alterations proposed, the development would have a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building. No objection has been raised subject to the use of appropriate materials and detailing.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposal would preserve the setting and significance of the Grade II listed former winter beehouse and would result in no harm to its significance. The proposal therefore complies with Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, NPPF Chapter 20, PfE Policy JP-P2 and CS Policy P2.

Residential Amenity

NPPF Policy P3 requires development proposals to provide healthy living conditions for existing and future occupiers and avoid unacceptable impacts arising from overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing development and other forms of disturbance.

CS Policy DM1 and the Council's Residential Development SPD similarly seek to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring residential amenity.

The proposal relates solely to the conversion of an existing building and does not involve any increase in footprint, height or overall built form. The relationship between the application building and neighbouring properties would therefore remain substantially unchanged.

The proposed openings would not result in unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers having regard to the separation distances involved and the existing site context. Furthermore, no unacceptable loss of light, overshadowing or overbearing impacts would arise as a consequence of the proposal.

The development would also provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future occupants through the provision of adequate living space, natural light and outlook.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with NPPF Policy P3, PfE Policy JP-P1, CS Policy DM1 and the Residential Development SPD.

Climate Change and Renewable Energy

NPPF Policy CC2 states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits arising from improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and from the installation of solar panels and other renewable energy technologies.

PfE Policy JP-S2 seeks to support the reduction of carbon emissions through improved energy performance and increased renewable energy generation.

The proposal includes inset solar photovoltaic panels together with wider energy efficiency improvements associated with the conversion of the building. The panels have been designed as inset panels within the roof slope, thereby limiting visual impacts whilst contributing towards renewable energy generation.

The proposal would therefore make a modest but positive contribution towards reducing operational energy demand and supporting local and national climate change objectives.

This weighs in favour of the proposal and accords with NPPF Policy CC2 and PfE Policy JP-S2.

Highways and Parking

NPPF Policy TR3 seeks to ensure that development proposals are located and designed in a manner that promotes sustainable patterns of movement and avoids unacceptable impacts on highway safety. Policy TR4 requires development to provide suitable access and parking arrangements.

CS Policies T1 and T2 similarly seek to ensure that development maintains appropriate levels of accessibility and highway safety.

The proposal would utilise the existing vehicular access serving Pike Fold and would not alter the established access arrangements. Sufficient off-street parking and manoeuvring space exists within the site, and the proposal would not give rise to any material highway safety concerns.

One letter of representation has been received. Whilst no objection is raised to the development itself, concerns have been expressed regarding construction traffic, delivery vehicles, skips and potential obstruction of Lightowlers Lane during the construction phase.

These comments are noted. However, the concerns relate primarily to temporary construction activities rather than the permanent effects of the completed development. The proposal itself would not prejudice access to neighbouring properties, nor would it adversely affect visibility or highway safety once complete.

Given the limited scale of the proposal and the temporary nature of any construction-related impacts, it is not considered that these concerns justify the refusal of planning permission.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in highway and parking terms and complies with NPPF Policies TR3 and TR4 together with CS Policies T1 and T2.

Conclusion

The proposal would facilitate the conversion of an existing detached garage to provide ancillary residential accommodation associated with Pike Fold.

The development would constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt, would preserve the openness of the Green Belt, would preserve the setting and significance of the nearby Grade II listed former winter beehouse, would not adversely affect residential amenity, highway safety or biodiversity interests, and would incorporate renewable energy measures consistent with local and national climate change objectives.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. No significant problems have arisen during the consideration of this application, and the application has been determined in a timely manner, in accordance with the policies with the Development Plan.

Human Rights and Public Sector Equality Duty

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report. In particular, Article 6 (1), of the European Convention on Human Rights in relation civil rights and a fair hearing; Article 8 of the ECHR in relation to the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 Protocol 1 of the ECHR in relation to the protection of property have all been taken into account.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Local Planning Authority under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application. In particular due regard has been afforded to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers are satisfied that the application material and Officers' assessment has taken into account these issues.

The application has been considered in accordance with the Rochdale Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy – Embracing All Voices (2024-2026), which seeks to promote a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion that benefit the community as a whole.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (4)

- 1 The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents hereby approved:

- Location Plan. Dwg no. 2620-01
- Existing Plans & Elevations. Dwg no. 2620-02
- Proposed Plans. Dwg no. 2620-03. Rev A
- Proposed Elevations. Dwg no. 2620-04. Rev A
- Block Plan. Dwg no. 2620-05

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan, the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The development hereby approved shall be carried out using the external materials specified on drawing number 2620-04 revision A unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure a satisfactory appearance of the development in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and Policy DP3 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4 The residential annexe hereby permitted shall not be occupied as a separate planning unit and shall only be occupied as ancillary accommodation to the existing residential dwelling.

Reason: The permission relates to buildings with shared access and amenity spaces and remain functionally related. Any subdivision into separate units of accommodation would require further consideration of the site arrangements and residential amenity standards.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during pre-application discussions to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.