

Joss Simpson,
Planning Officer
Bury Council
3 Knowsley Place
Duke Street
Bury
BL9 0EJ

Our ref: sa/pks/5013

Your ref:

30/08/2022

Dear Mr Simpson

**PLANNING STATEMENT:
THE GATEHOUSE, WOODHILL ROAD, BURY:
APPLICATION REFERENCE 68799**

I am instructed on behalf of the applicant to provide planning support with regard to their planning application for two storey extensions at front, side and rear with balcony at front and side, and an increase in height of roof to the existing dwelling.

This is a resubmission of the proposals refused on 17/02/2022. They take account of the reasons for refusal and the points made in the officer's report. In particular, it is submitted as a full application rather than a householder application as you were unconvinced on the evidence submitted that the application should be reasonably considered as an addition or alteration to the dwelling. Additional details are provided which show the extent of demolition and other alterations proposed to the existing dwelling.

My initial and lasting response to the proposals is that the scheme is for a very large extension and alterations to the existing dwelling, but that it is well-sited and designed and avoids any infringements of the normal interface distances or of neighbour amenity. The development is well-oriented and provides an open aspect to the main viewpoint from the public domain which is from the North along Woodhill Road; a positive element of good design.

To the extent that the previous application was refused because of its impact on the residential amenity of the occupiers of 89 Woodhill Road and 113 Canterbury Drive to an unacceptable level. Changes have been made to the proposals to set the siting of the extension further from the residential boundary to reduce the visual proximity of the proposals and allow for the introduction of landscaping to soften the views into my client's property.

The site is in the defined urban area where built development is permitted, and the site could be redeveloped to provide several new houses, although this would not meet the applicant's requirements. This is a family of Indian sub-continent origin which follows the Muslim religion and retains their traditional cultural values. Their intention is to create a dwelling where at least three generations of the family can live together, which is a feature typical of their traditional culture. That way they can provide mutual care and support through the generations whilst living in accommodation that respects the differing needs of men and women, and also provides quiet space with the correct orientation for regular prayers, another key feature of that culture. This form of accommodation is not available in new-build housing, and the existing dwelling and large site provides the only way that such accommodation could be available to the family.

The development plan comprises the saved policies of the UDP. Its policies support these proposals. The housing strategy has:

Objective 3: To develop a housing stock which reflects the needs and demands of the Borough's population.

- *The development of a wide range of housing types and tenures, both on individual sites and in particular locations.*
- *The identification of sites whose locational characteristics make them especially suitable to needs based housing development.*
- *The development of joint schemes with the private sector, housing associations and other agencies, through negotiation and agreement.*

Policy H1/2 directs development towards the urban area and away from open land and H2/3 sets out criteria against which residential extensions and alterations will be considered as:

- the size, shape, design and external appearance of the proposal;
- the character of the property in question and the surrounding area;
- the amenity of adjacent properties;
- visibility for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers of motor vehicles.

There is no offence to this policy and the scheme works well in improving the character of the site and existing dwelling without offence to adjacent residential uses or the wider character of the area. SPD 6, adopted in January 2020 provides additional guidance on meeting the requirements of this policy.

The UDP was adopted on 29/08/1997 and the development plan has yet to be revised. The UDP predates the original National Planning Policy Framework by over four years, and the current version of the NPPF by nearly 14 years. This means that significant weight must be afforded to the NPPF's policies in determining planning applications.

Paragraph 60 of the Framework states:

"To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay".
(my emphasis).

As discussed above, my client's family is a member of a cultural group that does have specific housing requirements, and this is specifically referenced in the SPG at §10.20, which is consistent with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy:

"Ethnic Considerations

10.20 Where there are special needs for religious observance or family living circumstances i.e. succahs and extended families, consideration shall be given, on an individual basis, to the relaxation of this guidance where it can be clearly demonstrated that there will be no direct harm to the principles outlined in Chapter 2."

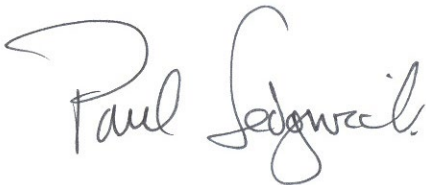
Chapter 2 sets out UDP policy H2/3, and the justification states:

"This policy is concerned with ensuring that extensions and alterations to residential properties are of a high standard. Extensions and alterations to dwellings, including garden extensions and garages, can be visually intrusive; restrict daylight, privacy and outlook to neighbouring properties; and unacceptably reduce the available garden area. For all these reasons it is necessary to adopt standards to control the design, form and size of proposed extensions and alterations to ensure that they are sympathetic in nature with the original building and surrounding area. The Council will issue more specific guidance on these matters as necessary."

Whilst there can be a discussion as to whether or not the proposed extensions dominate the original dwelling, in the circumstances it is inevitable that the cultural requirements of faith and extended families will lead to significant extensions to a dwelling and will almost always result in some change to its character. In this case there is no objective harm arising from the proposals either to neighbours or to the character of the area, this being a free-standing site on the urban edge where the existing dwelling is of a significantly different character to the neighbouring housing estate. This means that the flexibility provided by §10.20 in recognition of the particular needs of ethnic and religious groups can be engaged in the knowledge that any variation from policy and guidance is modest and does not outweigh the general benefit recognised in this paragraph of the SPG. Hopefully you can give full weight to the benefits that will be achieved for the applicant and her extended family in determining the application.

I trust that you find the revised submission to be acceptable.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Paul Sedgwick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" and last name "Sedgwick" clearly legible.

Paul Sedgwick Dip TP MRTPI
Principal.