Steven Abbott
Limited

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed Redevelopment of Disused and Derelict House with a New Dwelling and Related Infrastructure

Oban House, 2 Manchester Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, M21 9JG

Mr and Mrs Edge

August 2026

AUTHOR DETAILS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. I act for Mr and Mrs Edge who own the application site.

1.2. The application site is located at the junction of Manchester Road and High Lane in Chorlton-cum-Hardy.

1.3. It contains a large, detached house and gardens.

1.4. The site is within a predominantly residential area but in close proximity are a number of other uses including: -

- The Kadampta Medication Centre at 76, High Lane which is the immediate neighbouring property to the east;
- St Clement's Parish Church – diagonally opposite, on the corner of High Lane and St Clements Road;
- St Johns Roman Catholic Church and Presbytery on the corner of High Lane and St Clements Road – across High Lane from the site but facing it;
- Chorlton Church of England Primary School in St Clements Road;
- The Edge Theatre and Arts Centre in Manchester Road.
- Chorlton Methodist Church in Manchester Road next to The Edge Theatre

1.5. Residential properties in the area relate to various periods which is reflected in their heights, plot disposition, architecture and materials. The other land uses listed above comprise institutional buildings, the architecture of which is a function of their use or they Ire large enough to be converted into those institutional uses.

1.6. Access to the site is from Manchester Road via a single vehicular access.

1.7. High Lane is a principal road, A5145. Manchester Road is unclassified. Parking is unrestricted in High Lane by the subject site.

1.8. Considerable redevelopment and infilling have occurred in the neighbourhood comprising of single homes, town houses and apartments, e.g. Cooper Court opposite the site in Manchester Road.

1.9. To the north of the site the formerly small two storey dwelling has been extended by a striking contemporary design. It is a 'stand-alone' design with no reference to other buildings in the vicinity (this is a compliment not a criticism).

1.10. A feature of the corner frontages between High Lane and Manchester Road are the splayed front walls of the buildings on the subject site and the terrace opposite.

1.11. The property at the site consists of two and three storey elements. Both it and its garden are very run down behind high overgrown vegetation. The frontage which faces south does not currently make a positive contribution to the street scene or wider conservation area. This contrasts with the other three corners at the Manchester Road and High Lane junction.

1.12. As the survey drawings and structural report (both referred to later) show the building is in very poor condition, dangerous (physically and socially) and is in urgent need of action.

1.13. At the pre-application stage officers resisted the idea of an emergency planning application for its demolition preferring to await a full application for a replacement dwelling.

1.14. The Applicants currently live locally, and this is their project to provide a dwelling of an exceptional, high quality of design.

1.15. The architects, CB3 Design, won a competition run by the Applicants with that goal in mind.

1.16. I have been a member of the RTPI for over 50 years. In those years I have worked for local planning authorities in the Midlands, South East and North West. Since 1989 I have worked as a planning consultant with projects

nationwide. Many of the developments I have advised on for LPAs and clients have involved heritage assets including sites in conservation areas. I have promoted such areas from my early days when the concept was new.

1.17. This Statement sets out what I believe are the material considerations for the determination of this application. I do so by reference to the City Council's policies, designations; national planning policies and guidance. I hope that this is helpful to your Council, consultees and anyone else taking an interest.

2. THE PROPOSALS

2.1. It is proposed to demolish the existing house and replace it with a new one.

2.2. The existing house is not a heritage asset or a non-designated one.

2.3. It does sit in a conservation area (please see below) but is not identified anywhere as a key element within it.

2.4. As with the existing derelict one, the new house would be three storeys high with a basement below.

2.5. The proposed house has a vernacular profile in the main but contemporary details including the simple form of its fenestration.

2.6. Its massing would not be materially different to the existing house.

2.7. Its height would be marginally higher than the existing at its highest point (just 360mm or 14 inches) higher. This height difference would be indiscernible from the ground.

2.8. Its alignment closely corresponds to the existing one with its front elevation facing the cross roads between High Lane, Manchester Road and St Clements Road.

2.9. Facing materials would be traditional with brick being the predominant one (as with the existing).

2.10. The roof would be covered with natural slate.

2.11. There would be no change to the access arrangements.

2.12. The landscaping scheme is integral to the sustainable design and would replace an unkempt garden area which detracts from the neighbourhood and thus the Conservation Area.

2.13. A sustainable new surface water drainage system would replace a broken one originating from when the house was built.

2.14. The design reflects contemporary requirements for energy management and impacts whereas the original house was built a long time before such matters became important.

2.15. Construction would, of course, be robust in accordance with contemporary Building Regulations. The existing house is derelict and its structural integrity failing rapidly. Its higgledy-piggledy nature can be seen with the naked eye and it is a wonder to me that it is still standing.

2.16. The application is supported by a Structural Appraisal produced by Blackett-Ord Conservation Engineering[1]. This provides an objective conservation minded analysis which concludes as follows:

'The principal defect is the foundations. There has been differential settlement of up to around 250 mm such that the floors slope a similar amount across the building. As well, as the whole building has tipped to the north, there is a line of failure through the building on the line of the hallway/stairs. There is no reason to believe that the movement has stopped, although long term monitoring would confirm this, because there have clearly been ongoing repairs over many years. The photograph of 1959 clearly shows distortion having occurred before that date. It is indeed probable that the movement started shortly after construction. As a timeline assessment suggests: the building was built around 1880, the photo shows a problem in 1959, eighty years later, and the movement is still continuing 65 years after that.

Over the years window sills and lintels have been reset to take account of movement, a chimney has been rebuilt straight, and floors have been made up to level by overlaying. All this will be a continuing process unless the foundations are stabilised. Stabilisation will not of course put the

[1] Structural Appraisal of 2 Manchester Road Chorlton-cum-Hardy for Olivia & Martin Edge Ref: B116 January 2026 Blackett-Ord Conservation Engineering.

house back to where it was. The floors will still slope, and the walls will still lean.'

2.17. A quantity surveyor was also appointed by the Applicant. His conclusions are that it would cost considerably more to attempt to rework what is salvageable. In simple terms, such a scheme would be unviable.

2.18. The Architect's Design and Access Statement provides more detail about the proposed house and its extensive design development.

3. THE PRE-APPLICATION STAGE

3.1. A pre-application submission was received by the City Council on 7th January 2025 from CB3.

3.2. After some resistance to the principle of demolishing the existing house and the design of its proposed replacement then, a site meeting took place on 29th January 2025. This was attended by The Applicants, Katie Raw (Planning Officer, Area Team), Jackie Whelan (Heritage and Urban Design Officer), The Architect (Keven Lester of CB3 Design) and me.

3.3. It was a comprehensive and helpful viewing of the building including inside on all floors bar the cellar.

3.4. The advice and conclusions of the officers present were set out in an email[2]. It concluded as follows:

'Position

Subject to appropriate justification for the loss of the dwelling based on its poor structural condition and options to rectify, which should demonstrate that would result in significant or total loss of historic fabric then a replacement dwelling could be considered. As it would amount to less than substantial harm to heritage significance (the conservation area in this case) it would require to be offset by public benefits. The proposed new dwelling would have to be of an exceptional design that enhanced the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. The proposed design is not considered to meet this test and will require radical redesign and materiality'.

Manchester City Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas Panel

3.5. The Applicant sought feedback from the Panel before deciding what to do about the proposed scheme. Katie Raw kindly facilitated that and The

[2] Email from Katie Raw to Keven Lester of CB3 dated 6th February 2025.

Panel convened on 8th July 2025. For the Applicants, The Architect (Keven Lester of CB3 Design), Mrs Edge and I attended.

3.6. Mr Lester made a presentation and some of the Panel members asked questions or made comments. On the day, I noted the following comments and queries from The Panel

1. Preference of original scheme over the current one (a compromise design)?
2. Structural condition and qualification of the structural engineer
3. Reason for the building sagging to the north
4. Stone enclosing walls to the plot
5. Amount of accommodation: proposed v existing (ref to original and amended designs)
6. Sustainable design and construction
7. Street corner aspects
8. Repurposing of bricks
9. Energy conservation and ventilation
10. Relative heights – the proposed v existing buildings nearby
11. High Lane aspect – lower height – why?
12. Access position and parking spaces
13. Feedback on the current design and where the design has come from re the original one
14. Noted local community knowledge and the intention of Olivia and Martin to live there with their children
15. Tower or similar on the corner (the local heritage group ladies (?) present).

3.7. The Panel's discussion and deliberations were then made in camera.

3.8. Unfortunately, the minutes of the above do not appear to be accessible.

3.9. On 16th July Katie Raw sent an email to Keven Lester which passed on the comments of the Panel to her:

'The Panel noted the positive contribution that the existing building makes to the conservation area and stated that demolition should be avoided. They were advised of the poor condition of the building and asked for a conservation accredited structural engineer to carry out a full structural

assessment and feasibility study, as they should try to retain it and carry out the necessary repairs. The Panel acknowledged that there may be a lot of repair works but advised that elements could be rebuilt if necessary if it would retain the existing building on the site.

Commenting on the design of the new building, the Panel felt that the proposed building should be in the same orientation and approximate position as the existing. They stated that there was no need for it to be shaped with wings to front the two roads and that a simple, more compact, form and layout similar to that of the existing house was the right approach. The Panel noted that the existing building already successfully addressed the corner and there was some good detailing in the front and two side gables facing the street for it to work well in the street scene.

The Panel felt that the proposals were too expansive in their footprint which resulted in a form and layout that sprawls across the site. They would advise that the form and layout was simplified to a single mass to scale back the footprint and define the corner as per the existing, so that the landscaping setting and relationship with the corner remained the same.

It was observed that the proposed design responded poorly to its context. Both the original design and the revised design failed in this regard. The current design appears too complex and lacks coherence, and it unsuccessfully mixes traditional and contemporary elements. It was felt that a fresh approach to the design was needed rather than any tweaks or amendments.

The Panel noted the existing property having a strong vertical emphasis with projecting chimneys and suggested that there would be scope to utilise the roof for accommodation and look at a more restrained plan form and height rather than increasing the footprint with lower elements.

The designers should look at the existing building and surrounding conservation area and context in more detail, and through and detailed analysis of the area use this to inform the design approach'.

3.10. The Applicants are local people and wish to cooperate with the Council. Rather than stick to a scheme they felt was acceptable (with experienced professional advice) they have reviewed every point raised and acted as follows:

<u>The Response</u>

• Is demolition needed? • Advice required from a conservation specialist structural engineer.	• It is not a statutory, policy or planning practice guidance requirement to justify the demolition of the house on the basis of its condition. Its location in a conservation area does not impose such a test. • However, the Applicants commissioned a conservation specialist structural engineer and the report forms part of the application. I have already quoted the conclusions. It states in objective, professional terms what is obvious on the ground. • This work has been backed up by a quantity surveyor who has shown that a wholesale attempt at

	working around what theoretically can be is unviable.
• Orientation and position	• Whilst the Applicant's considered that their original design was appropriate and exciting, they have undertaken a comprehensive review to meet the Panel's preferences. They have also taken advice from a conservation consultant. This results in a completely new design. In simple terms, it is of a vernacular form with natural facing materials and the detailing is kept simple e.g. the fenestration.
• Vertical emphasis	• The new design does have that emphasis
• Sprawl	• The new design has been amended in terms of its footprint and does not have that impact.
• Understanding the context	• The Applicants, their architect and I had all known and or studied the context. Not just the

	immediate locale but the rest of the conservation area and beyond. However, a conservation specialist has been commissioned to assist.

3.11. The Design and Access Statement deals with the above matters in more detail.

4. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Development Plan –

Places for Everyone Joint DPD 2022-2038 (GMCA 2024) (PfE)

4.1. Whilst this is, of course, a strategic plan for Greater Manchester it is part of the development plan and there are some subject specific elements which support the application which I cross reference in this section.

4.2. Firstly, the Plan naturally presumes in favour of previously developed (brownfield land)[3] which by definition this site is.

4.3. It notes that the City Council (and others) has looked to maximise the contribution of brownfield land by applying higher densities in the most accessible locations,

4.4. The nine districts involved support the maximisation of the supply of the brownfield land at the core of the conurbation and limit the need for Green Belt releases. Small sites such as this make an important contribution to the supply of new homes.

4.5. The Plan directs the majority of development between 2022 and 2039 (the "plan period") to land within the urban area, most of which is brownfield land. Within the plan period around 90% of housing is aimed to be within the urban area. Small sites such as this make an important contribution to the supply of new homes.

4.6. The vision in the Plan is relevant. It is to make Greater Manchester one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on and grow old; a place where people are proud to live, with a decent home, a fulfilling job, and stress-free journeys the norm.

[3] Paragraphs 1.41 to 1.46 in Places For Everyone Joint DPD 2022-2038

4.7. It states that 'if you need a helping hand you'll get it'. A grant of planning permission for this well considered scheme would help the Applicants and their children to enjoy the Vision.

4.8. The Key Diagram shows that Chorlton is part of a wider part of the conurbation which is identified as Inner Urban and thus appropriate in principle for new development.

4.9. The Plan has many Objectives and sub-objectives. The following are material to this application.

Objective 1: Meet the housing need

- Increase net additional dwellings;
- Provide a diverse mix of housing.

Objective 2: Create neighbourhoods of choice

- Prioritise the use of brownfield land;
- Focus new homes within 800m of public transport hubs.

4.10. Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development is material.

4.11. The construction of the proposed new house would use sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains holistically.

4.12. In bringing forward this previously developed site for development, particular attention has been paid to tackling stability issues, ensuring that appropriate mitigation and remediation is implemented to enable the site to be brought back into use effectively.

4.13. Policy JP-S4: Flood Risk and the Water Environment is of relevance.

4.14. The proposed development represents an opportunity to manage surface water run-off through a new bespoke drainage system.

4.15. In addition, the development has to meet the mandatory water efficiency standard of 125 litres/person/day as set out in Building Regulations. The existing house is not affected by those Regulations.

4.16. Paragraph 7.10 in the Plan notes the importance of small sites (such as this one) in being a further source of housing land supply. It states that they are not typically identified comprehensively in brownfield registers and strategic housing land availability assessments. The Plan assumes that the supply of new dwellings on small sites will continue at the same rate in the City Council's area as has been seen over the last five years. In other words, it recognises the importance of these sites. A grant of permission on this site in the context of Greater Manchester makes a tiny contribution. However, conurbations provide thousands of such sites across the board and this underlines the importance of delivering each one as expeditiously as possible. It will be important to make the most of the existing housing stock.

4.17. The existing property is vacant and anyway is uninhabitable because of its condition. Paragraph 7.11 in the Plan addresses the subject. It states that whilst the proportion of dwellings that are vacant has halved since 2008 efforts are being made to further reduce long-term vacancies, including by working with property owners. A grant of planning permission will facilitate the replacement of a derelict, vacant house with a high quality new one. In its small way this factor would also help to contribute to the housing stock in the short term and its mix.

4.18. The Plan states in 7.26 in a section entitled 'Type, Size and Design of New Housing' that in addition to affordable housing, it is important that a mixture of tenures of new housing come forward so that all households can meet their needs and aspirations.

4.19. It goes on to note in 7.27 that Greater Manchester is in competition with cities across the world to attract and retain the skilled workers that will be critical to delivering high and sustained levels of economic growth.

Chorlton-cum-Hardy is one of the Victorian suburbs which provides the right profile for such people.

4.20. Significantly a key part of the overall strategy is to maximise the amount of development on brownfield sites in the most accessible locations and minimise the loss of greenfield and Green Belt land as far as possible. Chorlton and the site in particular is a highly accessible location for all modes of travel including trams.

4.21. The Plan states at paragraph 7.33 that the UK has the smallest average new-build dwellings in Europe and cost considerations for both developers and households are placing further downward pressure on dwelling size. This potentially creates a number of problems, resulting in less adaptable dwellings that are unable to respond to the changing needs of households, poor health resulting from cramped conditions and overcrowding, and overall, a poor quality of life. The lack of space can also inhibit homeworking, which will be increasingly important in helping to minimise the need to travel and enabling Greater Manchester to take advantage of digital-based business opportunities. It is therefore essential that new housing achieves minimum standards that will help to ensure that it is able to meet identified needs and contributes to rather than detracts from the relative attractiveness of Greater Manchester as a place to live. The provision of appropriate outdoor private amenity space will also be vital in delivering high quality homes that support good health. In the context of the proposed house on its site and location, those statements are highly pertinent.

4.22. The proposals are therefore supported by Policy JP-H3: 'Type, Size and Design of New Housing'

4.23. This requires that development across the plan area should seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes.

4.24. As per the policy the new dwelling would:

- Comply with the nationally described space standards; and

- Be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations

4.25. Innovation in new homes (as in this case) is being supported by the Policy where the principles of good design and contributes to local distinctiveness, including the use of modern methods of manufacturing that can help to improve the speed of delivery and increase building standards.

4.26. Policy JP-H4: 'Density of New Housing' states that new housing development should be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high-quality design.

4.27. Low densities may be acceptable where they can be clearly justified by (for example) site-specific issues, such as the design context and any potential impact on the wider townscape including heritage assets.

4.28. The pre-application submission confirmed that the City Council's planning and conservation officers do not see the subject site as one where high density housing is preferred, instead of the replacement of the existing house on a one for one basis.

4.29. Paragraph 8.2 in the Plan entitled 'Green Places' notes the importance of valuing the special qualities and key sensitivities of the City's landscapes (rightly recognising importance of an area's appearance to the sense of place held by those who live in or visit it).

4.30. So, the Plan seeks to protect and enhance green infrastructure (the wider network of green features which make a huge contribution to quality of life, promote good mental and physical health, create liveable places and support economic growth). The gardens at the property form part of the local green areas in the Conservation Area and the proposed development offers an opportunity to enhance them.

4.31. In addition, the proposals enable an overall enhancement of biodiversity.

4.32. Policy JP-G7 concerns trees.

4.33. Criterion 12 states that where development would result in the loss of existing trees, two new trees for each tree lost must be planted or other measures that would also result in a net enhancement in the character and quality of the treescape and biodiversity value in the local area, with a preference for on-site provision. In this case (as reported elsewhere, an ash tree must be felled). The landscaping scheme designed by Layer Studio[4] shows that in place of the ash, two new trees will be planted.

4.34. Criterion 13 requires the protection of trees and woodland during the construction phase of development. Such a scheme can be the subject of a condition on any planning permission granted. But normal protocols will be followed.

4.35. Policy JP-G8 seeks a net enhancement of biodiversity. The Applicants commissioned an ecologist to look at the site comprehensively and the conclusions are covered in the supporting assessments and mitigation proposals.

4.36. Heritage is covered by Policy JP-P2. This states that development proposals will be considered having regard to national policy. I have demonstrated above that the proposals are policy compliant.

4.37. The proposals are informed, as necessary, by the findings and recommendations of an appropriate heritage impact assessment (Jenny Wetton's) which is submitted with this application.

4.38. From the above it can be concluded that the proposals are in accordance with PfE.

4.39. This is a material consideration of considerable weight,

[4] Catherine Lester, Layer Studio, Landscape Architecture and Urbanism

Manchester City Council – Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012)

4.40. Spatial Principles for Manchester are set out in Policy SP1. The proposals are in accordance with that policy as follows:

- The site is not in the Regional Centre or the Airport's environs. As such, the policy promotes neighbourhoods of choice, providing high quality and diverse housing around district centres which meet local needs.
- The site is located in a place where walking, cycling and public transport are all easy.

4.41. Regarding the Core Development Principles under the policy, the proposed house would make a very positive contribution to choice as:

- It would be a well-designed place that would enhance the site and the wider Conservation Area.
- The removal of the disused, derelict and dangerous house present currently would make a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of the residents or those passing by. This is not just about the physical dangers but to remove the risk of anti-social behaviour or ingress into a dangerous place by people desperate for shelter.
- The site is previously developed land.
- It is well located for jobs, services, education and open space with no need for long travel times or distances for those facilities.
- The previously developed site is located in a highly sustainable location in the metropolitan area. A short walk away are Bee Network bus services 23, 25, 80, 85, 85A, 86, 87 and 150 (which runs along Wilbraham Road and stops in Manchester Road). There is a tram station in Chorlton on Wilbraham Road (near Morrisons) on the Rochdale-City-Centre-East Didsbury and Airport Line. The tram

station is also within easy walking distance. There is another stop at St Werburgh's to the east. Chorlton will also be on the Stockport, East Didsbury and City Centre Line – the Stockport link is part of the infrastructure now backed by Central Government Funding. Walking is easy on good quality, lit footways. Some of the bus services are in Bee Network's local link. These services will soon all be zero emissions.

4.42. Policy H1 in the Local Plan concerns the overall housing provision for the Manchester City Council administrative area from 2009-2027. This is a long-term policy and is strategic. However, the following policy details are of note:

- Outside the Inner Areas, the emphasis is on family housing at a low density. The site could accommodate many apartments perhaps up to 4 storeys high. There are many such developments in the Conservation Area, some higher than 4 storeys.
- The site is previously developed land by definition (excluding the garden).[5]
- The re-use of vacant, poor-quality housing is prioritised. Re-use is impossible given the state of the existing disused and derelict house – notwithstanding its lack of merit aesthetically.
- This is a new development which does take advantage of an existing 'vacant and derelict' building.
- The design retains usable amenity space (in a better way than the garden area now which does not interact well within the interior of the building (which sits at a higher level. The architect's drawings and Design and Access Statement (DAS) show how the garden has been considered closely within the whole design.
- The design does provide adequate space for motor cars and bicycles (in line with Policy T2). It should be noted that since the Local Plan was

[5] Glossary to the NPPF – December 2024

drafted all those years ago, there has been an exponential growth in the ownership or leasing of EVs and E-bikes (also, E-scooters). A new build proposal such as this must now provide EV charging infrastructure. The restoration of this derelict house would not.

- Similarly, a new build home must meet contemporary sustainable design and construction techniques. In addition, it can provide noise insulation – bearing in mind that it faces a principal road and cross roads – High Lane and has Manchester Road alongside.

- Socially, the existing building is a 'sitting duck' for anti-social behaviour. To do nothing is unhelpful to the social profile of the locality and neighbourhood.

- The site should be given priority as it is in close proximity to a district centre and a choice of high frequency transport modes – bus routes, the Metrolink and cycle hire for local trips. A stand of such bikes is located across the road on High Lane.

- The site is in a low-risk zone for river flooding (see below).

- It is not affected by any statutory or non-statutory designations apart from the Conservation Area.

- The orientation of the building and the design details do not cause any privacy issues for neighbours. The Design and Access Statement covers this aspect.

4.43. Figure 9.2 in the Local Plan shows that Chorlton is considered appropriate for small sites and infill opportunities.

4.44. Policy H6 concerns South Manchester within which Chorlton forms a significant part. Family housing is favoured outside the nearby District Centre. What is proposed is a bespoke family home.

4.45. Chorlton-cum-Hardy is a District Centre in the Local Plan. Such centres maintain the vitality and viability of the area by providing services locally

and minimising the need to travel. Policy C1 states that such centres have an essential role in providing key services to the City's neighbourhoods so that residents can access services easily. The application site is just a few minutes' walk away from Chorlton's centre.

4.46. The proposals represent an opportunity for the replacement of an old energy inefficient building (which is not fit for purpose) with a contemporary one. The new one would accord with Policy EN4 by reducing the need for energy through design. The Design and Access Statement produced by CB3 Design Architects illustrates how this is being approached on this project.

4.47. Policy EN8 concerns adaptation to climate changes. The proposed home has been designed to be adaptable to climate change in the manner required by the policy, where possible. These matters are also addressed in the Design and Access Statement.

4.48. Regarding surface water, there is (according to high level digital mapping) a 1 in 30pa risk of some surface water flooding at the junction of Manchester Road and High Lane. The Government's Flood Risk mapping suggests that this may affect some of the front garden and the rear. If the existing house remains there is no means of securing any improvement to alleviate this apparent issue. The redevelopment of the site would enable a remediation scheme as part of the development. A drainage detail condition can be imposed on the planning permission if granted.

4.49. On overheating, the building would minimise unnecessary heat gain by orientation, fenestration and other bespoke details.

4.50. Policy EN14, specifically about flood risk, contains various criteria on which I can comment that the site is not in a location which is a high risk for river flooding. As explained above, it may be affected by some surface water.

4.51. The proposals comply with Policy EN15 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) as follows:

- The site has no designation affecting it;

- The site is not identified as having biodiversity value;
- An ecological assessment has been undertaken and supports the planning application;
- This is an opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the site;
- Currently there is no management and without the redevelopment, biodiversity net gain is impossible to compel.
- This is an opportunity to enhance biodiversity notwithstanding current national requirements.

4.52. Regarding trees, a tree survey and strategy accompany the planning application[6] and particularly as the site is in a conservation area with a mature landscape.

4.53. The proposed development is cognisant of Policy EN17 (Water Quality). As explained above there may be a local surface water issue which affects the site. Consequently, the design of the scheme takes account of the need to prevent an increase in surface water run off or ingress into the application site from surface water in the public highway unrelated to the site.

4.54. The proposals are in accordance with Policy DM1 (Development Management) as follows:

- The development would be appropriately sited and laid out. It is of a scale, form, massing, materials and detail appropriate for this conservation area context;
- Close attention has been paid to the character of the surrounding area. The impact on the surrounding area of this bespoke and high-quality design would be positive;

[6] Landscape Ecology Ltd

- To remove the unsightly building would remove the day-to-day threat of vermin, odours and litter. There are no adverse impacts on neighbours. On the contrary, the uncertainty and anxieties caused by a derelict and disused house in a predominantly residential neighbourhood are removed;

- The existing house is super elevated above the gardens. The proposal enables a new house which meets contemporary requirements for disabled or otherwise handicapped or less mobile people. This site is in a very sustainable location for those with mobility constraints;

- The current derelict building and garden is a threat to community safety and crime. Its redevelopment removes the former and would minimise the latter by design;

- Generous internal accommodation and external space are proposed;

- Refuse storage and collection are 'planned in' to the proposed house. The existing house has no integral space for that use;

- There is existing access and car parking. The existing access will be retained but car parking is an integral part of the new layout;

- The effects on biodiversity, townscape, landscape and the conservation area context have all been considered very closely in formulating the proposals. Supporting information is provided in that regard;

- As described above, the local surface water issue indicated on high level mapping can be addressed in the flood risk and drainage details to be submitted later;

- The Design and Access Statement address the final bullet point under Policy DM1 concerning sustainable construction techniques.

4.55. I conclude on the development plan, that the proposal is wholly in accordance with both parts of it.

Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area

4.56. The site is located within the above area.

4.57. The subheadings below relate to those used on the Council's website in the section on this conservation area.

Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Building

4.58. In the information on the Council's website, it recognises that the character of the area is not about listed heritages assets. It notes that it is the relationship of the various buildings to one another, to their sites and to the streets that mostly determine the character of the area, rather than individual buildings of high architectural or historic quality. It points out that, only two buildings in the Conservation Area are listed. The juxtaposition of the proposed house with other buildings has been carefully considered in formulating the proposals as has the make-up of buildings in its sphere - Manchester Road, High Lane, Edge Lane and St Clements Road. Account was also taken of the townscape in Whitelow Road, to the east. As I stated above, the conservation area is made up of a disparate tapestry of buildings – some of townscape and architectural interest – many not. The point about the proposed house is that it is of a high-quality design skilfully designed for the site. The applicants brief and the architect's skill are aligned to deliver a building of high architectural quality and not a standard or poorly designed house.

4.59. The scheme has then benefited from input from the planning officer, conservation officer and The Panel. The design has been completely reviewed and revised.

Contribution of Key Unlisted Buildings

4.60. The Councils description of the area rightly refers to the presence and significance of places of worship. The Parish and Roman Catholic churches on opposite sides of St Clements Road, where it meets High Lane, are noted to have a major urban and architectural presence in the wider area. So does

the Methodist Church in Manchester Road. Those churches are all close to the application site.

Character and Relationship of Spaces

4.61. The City Councils narrative notes that collective gardens, both front and rear, provide important spatial characteristics relevant to the conservation area. It is not proposed to alter the general disposition on this site.

4.62. The document also refers to the spaces between buildings. It states that those vary and they are 'essentially street dominated.' They are important but the proposals would not materially affect that relationship.

Prevalent Materials and Local Details

4.63. The proposed building would use natural, traditional materials to face a contemporary home.

4.64. It is noteworthy that the extensions to the house on the north side, in Manchester Road, are modern and does not use the materials described. The extensions are stunning visually but enhance and preserve the eclectic character of the conservation area.

Contribution of Green Spaces

4.65. The proposals enable better management for the garden green space around the house.

Setting of the Conservation Area

4.66. The view along St Clements Road is mentioned. The site is a focal point when viewed from St Clements Road facing north. The exiting house is canted on a corner plot as are the houses on the other one with Edge Lane, as referred to earlier. Whereas the existing house has little intrinsic merit, is dilapidated and unwelcoming – the proposed one would be attractive but would be sensitively screened by the use of existing and proposed vegetation. It would enhance the focal point.

Negative Factors

4.67. The proposals would not cause any of the negative factors described on the Council's website, as follows:

- The existing boundary walls and gateposts will have to be reconstructed and the replacement of any materials would be in keeping. The Applicants, and their architect are happy to work with the Conservation Officer on those details;

- I agree that the particularly bland apartment building at the corner of High Lane and Whitelow Road pays little regard to the geometry of the adjacent roads and the junction. As stated above, the proposed house is splayed specifically to take account of the Manchester Road and High Lane junction;

- I also agree about the inappropriate architectural design of the apartment building singled out by the City Council for criticism.

Neutral Areas

4.68. I agree that the late 20Th Century/early 21st Century apartment buildings lack vitality and 'creative design qualities.' The application site is large enough to accommodate apartments. However, I doubt whether the economics of that scenario would result in a building of the high quality proposed. Furthermore, the revised brief and design exude creative design principles.

Conclusion (website)

4.69. The proposed development would preserve and enhance the conservation area.

4.70. Retaining the buildings is not an option. The proposed replacement would make a massive difference for the better.

4.71. Its massing, height, landscape, site layout and access in relationship to neighbouring buildings and to the wider area is wholly appropriate and in keeping.

4.72. Of great significance is the last paragraph which states that the Council will not attempt to impose particular architectural styles or tastes (as it must not) nor is it intending to stifle innovation or originality. Those words should enable a very positive approach to the proposed development. It will enhance local distinctiveness in all respects.

4.73. To conclude on the conservation area, the proposals will be a great addition which will preserve and enhance as a consequence of essential regeneration on the site.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (August 2026)

4.74. The NPPF must be considered in determining planning applications and is a material consideration.

4.75. In accordance with paragraph DM1 2 the Applicants engaged with the pre-application process because the site is in a conservation area, although the issues are not complex in this case.

4.76. Policy DM3 f is relevant as it states that (after taking all the other criteria into account) local planning authorities should approve applications such as this where they are in accordance with the development plan, the NPPF and any other material considerations. In this case the latter (the principle of redevelopment and design) have been exhaustively discussed and examined with the result being the current design.

4.77. Policy 5 1 is material for it states that where proposals accord with the development plan and the NPPF (as here) they should be assumed to be viable. It has been tortuously shown that repairing the existing tumble down building is unviable. Not that is the test anyway as the redevelopment of unlisted property in conservation areas has never been unacceptable in principle.

4.78. The presumption in favour of sustainable development clearly applies in this case – as per paragraphs S3 and S4 in the NPPF.

4.79. As the development is within a settlement it should be approved as the benefits are not 'substantially outweighed' by any adverse effects when assessed against the national decision making policies in the NPPF (my emphasis).

4.80. The mitigation of climate change policy and adaptation (CC2 and 3) are material considerations.

4.81. ! c is met as the design approach would conserve energy

4.82. 1 d is met as existing materials will be used where possible and they are fit for purpose

4.83. Sub paragraph 2 is important. It states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving energy efficiency of existing buildings. The proposed development would replace a very inefficient old property with a new one which would have a highly efficient energy conservation form. Please refer to the DAS on this and matters of relevance covered by Policy CC3 e.g. the minimisation of overheating.

4.84. The proposals comply with Policy L2 as they make effective use of land.

4.85. The policy states that the benefits of a development of this type should be given substantial weight (my emphasis). The benefits under the policy which are met are:

- Remediating a derelict site (criterion a)
- Making better use of a site on which is a vacant and underutilised (disused) house and garden land (criterion b). An example cited is bringing back into use empty homes. In this case achieving that is impossible but the proposal would bring a home back to a site which is a waste of an opportunity at present.

4.86. Policy L3 is met as the density of the site is not changes and is appropriate for the Conservation Area context.

4.87. In terms of L3 1, the site has excellent connectivity. It would also be well-designed, attractive and a healthy place.

4.88. The proposals comply with Policy DP3 concerning the key principles of well-designed places. They do respond well to their context (the history, character and features of the site and its setting). The development would integrate well and enhance their surroundings. It is noted that innovation or change is acceptable where appropriate.

4.89. The development is in accordance with paragraph 2 under Policy L3 too in regard to b (climate change mitigation) and g (identity)

4.90. The DAS deals with flood risk. The site is in Flood Zone 1 and thus a flood risk assessment is unnecessary.

4.91. The proposals are in accordance with Policy N2 (the natural environment). As the various supporting assessments show, the environmental qualities of the site have been closely considered regarding habitats(a), natural features(d), and biodiversity(f).

4.92. The development is consistent with Policy HE5 which concerns the effects on heritage assets. My position is that the heritage asset in this case is the Conservation Area and not the tumble down house on the site. The site **is** important in the conservation area, not the building because of its street corner location and juxtaposition with neighbouring properties. My comments about heritage policies in the NPPF are made on that basis. Jenny Wetton has produced a Heritage Statement which supports the application.

4.93. I consider that the proposals should be determined on the basis that they have a positive effect on the Conservation Area (Policy HE5 2a) and have no effect on its significance (Policy HE5 2b).

4.94. Substantial weight is due to the proposals as the conservation area's qualities are not adversely affected but enhanced. (Policy HE6.1).

4.95. As such policy HE6 2 supports the application as the proposals would have a positive effect on the Conservation Area.

4.96. Policy HE7 is also complied with. The proposals would have a positive effect on the conservation area. The policy states that in such circumstances the proposals should be supported.

4.97. Policy HE9 is specifically about conservation areas. Paragraph 1a is important. It refers to the retention and conservation of buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area where possible. My opinion is that the existing tumble down, derelict house makes no positive contribution but a negative one.

4.98. Even if it did make a positive contribution HE7 acknowledges that it may not be possible to conserve such buildings.

4.99. Paragraph 3 under this policy recognises that buildings may not necessarily contribute to the significance of the conservation area.

4.100. What is true is that the proposals retain the site residential use for a well-designed new house. This means that the proposals comply with that same paragraph (3), ensuring the retention of the site in its historic form.

4.101. Annex D in the NPPF refers to housing calculations and supply. Regarding paragraph 8 in Annex D, as the City Council does not have a five year supply currently, the tilted balance applies. There is thus an even greater presumption in favour of granting planning permission.

4.102. From the above I can conclude the proposals are in accordance with the NPPF and its policies justify why planning permission should be granted.

Biodiversity Net Gain

4.103. Policy and regulations changed on 6th August 2026 so that small sites such as this one are exempt from a BNG levy. However, the Applicants' proposals are sensitive to biodiversity and seek to achieve a positive change compared to the unmanaged and overgrown garden at present – which has no merit and is an eyesore. This is notwithstanding the risk of unsavoury discarded items in it (accessible to people, including children, now).

National Planning Practice Guidance

4.104. In approaching this project cognisance has been taken of the section on 'Planning for Well-Designed Places.' This is evident from the pre-application engagement and focus. To reiterate, the Applicants' set out to achieve a house of a very high quality which would be suitable for the context and enhance the locality including the street scene. The National Design Guide principles relevant are:

- Context;
- Identify;
- Built form;
- Homes and buildings;
- Lifespan;
- Nature.

4.105. There is no local design guide to refer to.

4.106. The Panel were engaged in this case within the pre-application process. This was welcomed in principle by the applicants, architect and me.

4.107. The local community was not engaged at the pre-application stage, given the minor nature of the proposals and their compliance with policy.

5. THE LAW AND THE 'HERITAGE BALANCE'

5.1. The redevelopment of property in conservation areas is common but individually the proposals can generate emotion. It is important to consider whether special attention has been paid to whether the proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area[7]. This is the position established by local planning authorities, appeal inspectors and The Courts over the past 60 years.

5.2. In recent times, assessing impacts on designated heritage assets involves what is known as the 'heritage balance'. In this case the heritage asset is the conservation area as a whole and not the house.

5.3. This is a weighting system to assess the materiality of the impact.

5.4. Please refer to The Heritage Statement supporting this application[8].

[7] Section 72 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.
[8] Heritage Statement by Jenny Wetton MSc (Arch Cons) IHBC, Heritage Consultant, Jenny Wetton Conservation

6. PRECEDENTS

6.1. There are, of course, countless examples of planning permissions for the redevelopment of buildings in conservation areas.

6.2. They include residential properties of varying ages and styles.

6.3. The table below lists just a few examples of some of them with notes about why they are significant to this case. The decision documents are provided as appendices.

6.4. I can provide other examples including those I have personally been involved with.

Reference	Date	Location	Notes
Appeal – PINS reference: APP/Q4245/W/24/3336460	28/01/2025	Hale Barns	• The main issue was whether the redevelopment of a detached house would preserve or enhance the conservation area involved. • The conservation area has various character areas within it rather than a uniformity. • The house was not considered to be important to the appearance of the wider

			conservation area • A neutral effect in the heritage balance (paragraph 56)
Appeal – PINS reference: APP/E5330/E/10/2132574	24/03/2011	Heathway, London	• The main issue was the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of a conservation area • Redevelopment of a detached house for two • An eclectic conservation area • The existing house makes a neutral contribution to the conservation area. • New houses of a contemporary design

Cheshire East Council 21/1049M[9] Decision Notice and Officer's Report	03/11/2021	Wilmslow	• A mock Tudor outbuilding to a Victorian detached house • The Victorian House was noted to be of local interest • The conservation area (a Victorian suburb one) contains examples of modern infilling and redevelopment. • Officer's conclusion was the loss of the existing building would not be detrimental to the Conservation Area • The proposed replacement for the outbuilding

[9] The architect was as with the current application, Keren Lester of CB3 assisted by me as the planning consultant.

			was of a contemporary design

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. I have demonstrated that the proposals are in accordance with the development plan and the recently published version of the NPPF – the starting points for decision making.

7.2. This project is not speculative but one over which great care has been taken to deliver a contemporary, sustainable dwelling into a conservation area. Its high quality and appropriateness should be applauded as it will preserve and enhance the conservation area.

7.3. I have drawn attention to the fact that the redevelopment of buildings in conservation areas is not unusual subject to an approach established over decades by case law.

7.4. The Applicants have responded constructively to the pre-application process including The Panel's comments. The design of the proposed house has been fundamentally changed.

7.5. Despite the fact that the structural integrity of the existing derelict house is not a material consideration in policy terms for decision makers, the Applicants commissioned specialist conservation engineers to assess the feasibility of repairing the building. They have also gone to the expense of instructing quantity surveyors to establish the cost of wholesale rebuilding. This body of work shows that the only sensible option is its replacement.

7.6. The proposed development would preserve and enhance the conservation area. Jenny Wetton's comprehensive supporting Heritage Statement shows why.

7.7. In terms of the overall planning balance there are compelling reasons why planning permission should be granted expeditiously.

7.8. In the circumstances, I respectfully request the City Council to grant planning permission for this very worthy project.

8. APPENDICES[10]

8.1. Hale Barns appeal decision letter – 2025 – PINS reference: APP/Q4245/W/24/3336460

8.2. Heathway, London appeal decision – 2011 - PINS reference: APP/E5330/E/10/2132574

8.3. Wilmslow planning permission – 2021 – Cheshire East Council reference.: 21/1049M

8.4. Wilmslow planning permission officer's report - Cheshire East Council reference.: 21/1049M

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Chartered Town Planner

August 2026

[10] The appendices are four separate documents