

# APPLICATION REPORT - PA/343757/19

Planning Committee, 18 December, 2019

**Registration Date:** 01/08/2019  
**Ward:** Saint Mary's

**Application Reference:** PA/343757/19  
**Type of Application:** Full Planning Permission

**Proposal:** Erection of indoor rock-climbing centre with car parking, landscaping and associated works.  
**Location:** All Nations Church, Egerton Street, Oldham, OL1 3SE  
**Case Officer:** Dean Clapworthy

**Applicant:** Stoller Charitable Trust  
**Agent :** AEW Architects

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## THE SITE

The proposal relates to a vacant site between Egerton Street and Rock Street previously occupied by a church hall. The Mahdlo youth centre and surgery are to the east and a children's nursery to the west. There is a fall downhill of around 7m from Egerton Street to the lower car park on the site (with a further fall to Rock Street). There are mature trees and groups of trees at the site, largely clustered at the western and eastern boundary. Relatively new residential development opposes the site to the north-west.

Existing vehicular access to the site is taken from Rock Street.

## THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the erection of an indoor rock-climbing centre (Use class D2) with landscaping and associated works. The development would comprise the following principal elements:

- A rock climbing centre housed in a single building that would be built into the slope. It would generally be in the form of a flat roofed block (with a gentle slope) that has been designed to represent a rock form
- It would have a maximum height at the southern elevation (to Rock Street) of around 17.7m and 4.8m at the north elevation (to Egerton Street). The two long elevations and the southern elevation would essentially be blank, incorporating only emergency access doors. The principal elevation to Egerton Street would incorporate a glazed entrance with an overhanging canopy. The building would provide climbing/bouldering, cafe and viewing area, reception area, soft play and party rooms with ancillary welfare and staff facilities, all set out over four floors.
- A new pedestrian forecourt would be created to the Egerton Street frontage. There would be no dedicated parking, but a new service access would be created from Rock Street;
- The felling of 12no. trees to facilitate the development of the site.

## RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE:

DM/341328/18: Prior approval for demolition of the former All Nation Church. Approved March 2018.

## RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES & GUIDANCE

The site falls within Oldham town centre and the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area. The Grade II\* listed Church of St. Mary and St. Peter is to west.

The site is unallocated. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

### **Joint Development Plan Document (DPD)**

Policy 1: Climate change and sustainable development  
Policy 2: Communities  
Policy 5: Promoting Accessibility and Sustainable Transport Choices  
Policy 9: Local Environment  
Policy 15: Centres  
Policy 17: Gateways and Corridors  
Policy 18: Energy  
Policy 20: Design  
Policy 21: Protecting Natural Environmental Assets  
Policy 24: Historic Environment

### **Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies**

Policy D1.5: Protection of Trees on Development Sites

### **CONSULTATIONS**

Environmental Health	No objection, subject to conditions relating to noise mitigation measures.
Greater Manchester Ecology Unit	No objection, subject to conditions relating to birds and landscaping.
Sport England Tree Officer	No comment. No objection, subject to the provision of replacement trees at a rate of 3 to 1.
United Utilities	No comment.
Greater Manchester Police Architectural Liaison Unit	No comment.
Drainage Highway Engineer	No comment. No objection, subject to a condition concerning cycle storage.

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

The application has been advertised by neighbour notification letter, site and press notices. Two representations have been received, one of which objects raising concerns of traffic and parking issues.

The further representation stresses that, whilst not objecting to the proposal, the neighbouring GP surgery would not allow parking on the associated car park and that construction noise ought to be kept to a minimum.

### **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The principal issues relate to:

- Principle of the development;
- Design and impact on visual amenity (including Heritage);
- Access and highway safety;
- Impact on amenity;
- Other matters.

#### Principle of the development

The proposal is for development that constitutes a main town centre use at a site that is

located in the defined town centre. Furthermore, it would enhance the 'offer' within the town centre, complement existing uses and would be within walking distance of public transport stations and hubs. Therefore, the principle of the development is acceptable and is to be encouraged.

#### Design and impact on visual amenity (including Heritage)

The design of the building is determined to a significant degree by its use. Internally, it is necessary to deliver the requisite height to facilitate the primary function as an indoor climbing centre. Hence, any building would need to have a tall elevation. The proposed site slopes significantly down from Egerton Street, such that the building has been designed to encompass and take advantage of the fall in levels. The design concept was to produce a building that would imitate the form of a rock protruding out from the site, similar to that of the local gritstone.

From Egerton Street, the building would have a single storey elevation and the large roof would slope up gently. This, coupled with the fall in the site, would result in a south elevation of around 17.7m in height for almost the full width of the site.

In order to reduce the perception of the scale and mass of the building, the profiled metal panels would be attached with the 'grain' in the panels set at different directions and separated by seamless 'fractures'. The panels would overlay a brick base, which would be a darker shade of grey.

Whilst there is no doubt that at 17.7m it would be of an impressive stature and form and represent a significant vertical element in the immediate street scene, the choice of materials and method of attachment would serve to lessen the impact. Furthermore, the context of the site includes existing large scale buildings, which are in some cases of a similar mass and bulk (e.g. the Mahdlo centre) and views of the buildings scale would vary on the approach from different directions.

The submitted Heritage Statement notes that three panoramic views are identified from the churchyard of the listed Church of St. Mary and St. Peter in the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP).

The Statement finds that in views from both the Conservation Area and the listed Church the proposed development would form part of a highly varied townscape and would be visible in combination with other modern buildings to the north of Rock Street. The proposed building would be larger than the former building at the site, but it would be viewed in the context of both Horsedge Mill and the Mahdlo Centre. Views of the proposed building from the listed church would be filtered by trees and the distance would ensure that it would not dominate or draw attention to such an extent that the significance of the heritage assets would be harmed.

The Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed development would not affect the ability to appreciate the topography of the conservation area, the legibility of the historic townscape or the key buildings in the area, nor would it harm the experience of the churchyard as an aspect of setting and a key area of green space. These findings are not disputed.

Given the above, and subject to careful control of the finishing materials by condition, it is considered that the proposed development would not have any unacceptable impacts upon visual amenity nor the noted heritage assets.

#### Access and highway safety

It has been confirmed that the operation/management of the facility, which is unlikely to be dependent on regular large groups arriving by private bus or coach, with most users arriving and leaving as individuals or smaller groups. It is also noted that given the location, public transport is easily accessible and that there are public car parks nearby.

The Highway Engineer does not therefore expect that there would be a significant increase in traffic generation as a result of the proposed development or that there would be an unacceptable impact upon highway safety. Subject to a condition requiring agreement and implementation of secure cycle storage facilities, the proposal is acceptable in highway terms.

#### Impact on amenity

The site is bounded by dwellings to the north on the opposite side of Egerton Street. These dwellings are raised above street level. To either side and to the rear of the site are a mix of community and commercial uses and a public car park. The form and position of the building would ensure that there would not be any overbearing impacts or loss of privacy to nearest sensitive uses.

The supporting Noise Impact Assessment Report and Ventilation Strategy demonstrate that the activities that would occur within the building would not have any unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring amenity and the Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that the proposal would be acceptable, subject to condition agreeing a scheme of external ventilation.

#### Other matters

The supporting Ecological Assessment found that the site has negligible to low suitability for protected and notable species and no UK or local priority habitats are present. The likely impacts would therefore be limited to nesting birds. The GMEU has not objected to the proposal subject to the protection of nesting birds and landscape enhancement at the site.

The proposal would necessitate the loss of 12 semi/mature trees at the site. The Council's Tree Officer has confirmed that the proposal would necessitate the provision of 36 replacement trees (the precise location has not been identified at this stage). The applicant has agreed that such should be secured by a section 106 obligation.

#### Conclusion

The proposed development would deliver a major recreational development to support and enhance the offer in Oldham town centre and would represent sustainable development given the location close to public transport and economic benefits in the form of investment and on-going employment. Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal would not have any unacceptable adverse impacts on traffic and highway safety, visual, neighbouring and general amenity, ecology and biodiversity and would not be at risk from contamination.

Furthermore, it would not have any unacceptable impacts upon the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area or listed buildings and be of an appropriate design in this town centre location.

The proposal therefore complies with the relevant local and national planning policies.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Committee resolves:

1. To grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out below and to a Section 106 obligation being secured to provide a contribution to deliver 36 replacement trees off-site.
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Economy to issue the decision notice upon satisfactory completion of the planning obligation.
  1. The development must be begun not later than the expiry of THREE years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - To comply with the provisions of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, as

amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved plans and specifications submitted and referenced as follows:

11069-AEW-XX-SI-DR-A-0600(S2)(P01)Site Location Plan  
11069-AEW-XX-SI-DR-A-0602 P04 Proposed Site Plan

11069-AEW-XX-LG-DR-A-0605(S2)(P01)Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan  
11069-AEW-XX-UG-DR-A-0603(S2)(P01)Proposed Upper Ground Floor Plan  
11069-AEW-XX-M1-DR-A-0604(S2)(P01)Proposed Mezzanine Floor Plan  
11069-AEW-XX-RF-DR-A-0606(S2)(P01)Proposed Roof Plan

11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0630(S2)(P01)Proposed Elevations - Sheet 1  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0631(S2)(P01)Proposed Elevations - Sheet 2  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0632(S2)(P01)Proposed Development Elevations Sheet 1  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0633(S2)(P01)Proposed Development Elevations Sheet 2  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0634(S2)(P01)Proposed Development Elevations Sheet 3

11069 -AEW-XX-SI-DR-A-0644(S2)(P01)Proposed Site Sections  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0641(S2)(P01)Proposed Sections-Sheet 1  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0642(S2)(P01)Proposed Sections-Sheet 2  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0643(S2)(P01)Proposed Sections-Sheet 3  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0643(P01)Planning Coloured Elevation Sheet 1  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0644(P01)Planning Coloured Elevation Sheet 2  
11069-AEW-XX-XX-SK-A-0550 Direction of Cladding Profile - Sheet 1  
11069-AEW-XX-XX-SK-A-0551 Direction of Cladding Profile - Sheet 2  
11069-AEW-XX-ZZ-DR-A-5001(P02)Typical Perimeter Strip Sections - Sheet 1

Reason - For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and specifications.

3. No development comprising the erection of any external walls shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development, including the roof, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The materials to be used throughout the development shall be consistent in terms of colour, size and texture with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable in the interests of the visual amenity of the area having regard to Policy 20 of the Oldham Local Plan.

4. The use of the building hereby approved shall not commence until a scheme for the provision of secure cycle parking has been implemented in accordance with details which shall have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved facility shall remain available for users of the development thereafter.

Reason – In order to promote sustainable means of travel having regard to Policies 5 and 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

5. No works to trees or shrubs shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the LPA.

Reason - In order to ensure that nesting birds are not unacceptably affected, in accordance with Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan.

6. Prior to the implementation of hard and soft landscape works, details, including an implementation plan, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The hard landscape details shall include hard surfacing materials and street furniture, where relevant. The soft landscaping works shall include planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants and trees, noting species, plant/tree sizes and proposed numbers/densities and the implementation programme. The content of the plan should include elements to mitigate for loss of trees shrubs and bird nesting habitat.

All planting shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details in the first available planting season following the completion of the development, or such longer period which has previously been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and shall be maintained for a period of 5 years from the agreed date of planting. Any trees or plants which die, become diseased, or are removed during the maintenance period shall be replaced with specimens of an equivalent species and size.

Reason - To ensure that the development site is landscaped to an acceptable standard having regard to Policies 9, 20 and 21 of the Oldham Local Plan, and saved Policy D1.5 of the Unitary Development Plan.

7. Prior to the commencement of any part of the development hereby approved, including site clearance, excavation or construction works or the entry of vehicles or plant into the site, all existing trees to be retained, shall be protected in accordance with the tree protection measures as detailed in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (by Urban Green dated November 2019). The protection measures shall be maintained for the duration of the development operations and no operations or storage whatsoever shall take place within the fenced protection areas.

Reason - Prior approval of such details is necessary to protect existing trees and hedges having regard to saved Policy D1.5 of the Unitary Development Plan.

8. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the measures/recommendations in the Noise Impact Assessment Report by Dooley Associates (Ref. 26413/NAI1) dated 05 July 2019, and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason - To minimise the impact of noise on existing development in the vicinity having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

9. The building and/or externally mounted plant and equipment shall be insulated in accordance with a scheme submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is first brought into use. Any work implementing the scheme shall be completed before the commencement of the use and shall be retained at all times thereafter.

Reason - To minimise the impact of noise on existing development in the vicinity having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

10. No machinery shall be operated, no process shall be carried out and no deliveries taken at or despatched from the site outside the following times 08:00 to 22:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 20:00 on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason - To minimise the impact of noise on existing development in the vicinity having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.



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