

APPLICATION REPORT - PA/344412/20

Planning Committee, 21 May, 2020

Registration Date: 30/01/2020
Ward: Alexandra

Application Reference: PA/344412/20
Type of Application: Full Planning Permission

Proposal: Demolition of existing ancillary buildings and glasshouses with phased replacement of new facilities including erection of 2 storey office building (Use Class B1), new glasshouse structure (horticultural use), remodelling and extension of existing portal frame storage unit, hard and soft landscaping works and amended parking and servicing layout

Location: Alexandra Park Depot, Kings Road, OLDHAM, OL8 2BN

Case Officer: Dean Clapworthy

Applicant Agent : Oldham Council
Walker Simpson Architects

THE SITE

The proposal relates to the existing Oldham Council depot located in the south-east corner of Alexandra Park, which is designated Grade II* listed in the Register of Parks and Garden of Special Historic Interest in England and a Conservation Area. The site presently accommodates a number of office buildings, glasshouses, an open-sided storage shed, shipping/storage containers and associated horticultural paraphernalia, service roads and vehicle parking areas and there is a community growing hub with raised beds and polytunnel. There are two vehicular accesses into the site from Kings Road.

The site rises steeply at the northern end to the Park Offices occupying the original Gardener's Cottage and entrance into the wider park, and less so to the eastern boundary. All boundaries to the site contain robust vegetation and a mix of fencing types, including wrought iron railings to Kings Road. There are listed buildings/structures to the north of the site, the closest of which are the conservatory (Grade II) and the observatory (Grade II).

Nearest dwellings are some distance to the south of the site.

THE PROPOSAL

The aspiration for the proposal is for this area to play a greater role in the day to day operations of the park and encourage interaction with the public through a range of community initiatives with a focus on mental and physical health.

The proposal comprises the following principal elements, following demolition of the existing offices, ancillary buildings and glasshouses:

- A two storey office building (Use Class B1) providing office accommodation and associated welfare facilities positioned adjacent to the south-east boundary to Kings Road. It would have a maximum height of 9.8m and footprint of 32m x 21m. It would have a multi-ridged roof (with parallel mounted photovoltaic panels , with significant glazing to elevations and horizontal screening elements. To be finished with a rendered base and metal sheeting to walls and roof;
- New glasshouse structure for horticultural use positioned centrally within the site. It would have a maximum height of 5.5m and footprint of 52.3m x 24.3m;
- Remodelling and extension of existing portal frame storage unit by extending either end

of the building to the same profile as the existing. It would have energy and resource saving features integrated, including a photovoltaic array to the roof, a biomass boiler and rainwater harvesting;

- Hard and soft landscaping works;
- Amended parking and servicing layout via retained access points from the adopted highway. Parking spaces would be increased at the site for all vehicle types and users.

The arrangement of the buildings and servicing areas would be re-configured to clearly separate Council service vehicles from staff and visitors. All new buildings would be located within the level lower area of the depot.

Operating hours would remain the same as at present between 07.00 to 18.30 daily.

RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE:

None relevant

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES & GUIDANCE

The 'Development Plan' is the Joint Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) which forms part of the Local Plan for Oldham.

The site falls within the Alexandra Park Conservation Area and is also a Registered Park and Garden and a Green Corridor and Link as identified on the Proposals Map pertaining to the Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

Joint Development Plan Document (DPD)

Policy 1: Climate Change and Sustainable Development
Policy 5: Promoting Accessibility and Sustainable Transport Choices
Policy 6: Green Infrastructure
Policy 9: Local Environment
Policy 18: Energy
Policy 19: Water and Flooding
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

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

CONSULTATIONS

Highway Officer	No objection, subject to conditions relating to parking and secure cycle storage spaces.
United Utilities	No objection. An updated response will be provided at Committee.
GM Police	No objection, subject to a condition to reflect the physical security specifications set out in the Crime Impact Statement and agreement of amended security lighting measures.
Greater Manchester Ecology Unit	No objection, subject to conditions requiring further bat survey work, protection of nesting birds and badgers, containment/eradication of invasive species and biodiversity enhancement.
Environment Agency	No comment

LLFA	No objection
Tree Officer	No objection, subject to condition requiring the implementation of the planting plan and specification
Environmental Health	No objection, subject to conditions relating to landfill gas and land contamination.
The Garden Trust	No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been advertised by Press and Site Notice. No representations have been received.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider are:

- Principle of development
- Design and amenity (including impacts upon heritage assets)
- Access and highway safety
- Other matters (Contaminated land, drainage, ecology and trees, energy)

Principle of development

The proposal relates to the existing Council depot that contains offices, horticultural and storage buildings and associated structures. The replacement of these with alternative buildings for the same uses is therefore acceptable in principle.

Design and amenity (including impacts upon heritage assets)

DPD Policy 9 'Local Environment' states that it is necessary to consider how a proposed development impacts on the visual appearance of the existing building. DPD Policy 20 requires such proposals to respond positively to the environment, contribute to a distinctive sense of place, and make a positive contribution to the street scene. DPD policy 24 states that development within the affecting the setting of a listed building or structure or a conservation area must serve to preserve or enhance its special interest and its setting, character or appearance of the area.

NPPF paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. NPPF paragraph 196 states that where development proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, this harm should be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal.

The proposal relates to the existing depot that has evolved in a haphazard manner over time. It contains an array of ad-hoc buildings and structures, such as shipping containers and rather utilitarian low rise office buildings that do not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the park. However, the depot has a robust landscaped boundary and is not widely visible beyond the depot itself.

The proposed development would rationalise the number of buildings across the depot site and refresh the appearance of what is presently an amalgamation of disparate utilitarian buildings. The proposed buildings are contemporary in design and appropriate to the individual function of the building. They would be of a higher quality than the buildings they are proposed to replace and would therefore enhance the appearance of the site in general terms.

Whilst the proposed new office and glasshouse would be higher than those they would be replacing, the submitted Heritage Statement notes that the change in level between the park and the depot and the existing screen of trees is sufficient that the proposals, as demonstrated in the proposed site sections, would have a minimal / negligible impact on key views and would not therefore have a negative affect on the historic character of Alexandra

Park, nearby listed buildings and the setting and appearance of the conservation area. However, this would be conditional on material colours/details, which should be subtle and unimposing.

The Garden Trust supports this assessment.

Thus overall, the development would cause less than substantial harm to the noted heritage assets. However, this harm is justified and outweighed by the public benefit of providing high quality buildings with defined public and private spaces, including the incorporation of a visitor area, within an improved setting.

Given the above, the proposal would comply with the above policies and the NPPF.

Access and highway safety

DPD Policy 5 states that the Council will ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users by ensuring appropriate highway safety measures and schemes are implemented as part of development proposals. Policy 9 states that local environmental quality and amenity will be protected and/or improved by ensuring development minimises traffic levels and does not harm the safety of road users. The NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The Highway Officer notes that the Transport Assessment has shown that the additional traffic movements would not be significant and would have little effect on the local highway network. Parking provision across the site would be appropriate (increasing the number of spaces), and there are opportunities for visitors and staff to travel to the site using more sustainable modes of transport than the private car.

The proposal would not therefore have any unacceptable impacts upon highway safety.

Other matters

Ground Conditions

The Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that it would be appropriate to require the development to be implemented in accordance with the submitted Site Investigation Report.

Drainage

The Lead Local Flood Authority does not object to the proposal subject to implementation in accordance with the recommendations of the Flood Risk Assessment.

Ecology and trees

The GMEU notes that no significant ecological issues were identified by the developer's ecological consultant and that issues relating to bats, badgers, nesting bird, invasive species and landscaping can be resolved via condition.

The Council's Tree Officer considers that the proposal has been designed with tree retention and protection having been duly considered and that the felling/pruning works required are reasonable and necessary to facilitate this development. The proposed planting plan details an appropriate level and type of replanting that would provide adequate mitigation and should enhance and improve the site as a whole.

Energy

The proposal is required to achieve the energy efficiency targets indicated in DPD Policy 18. The proposal would incorporate significant energy efficiency features which would achieve significant savings. A condition should be attached to secure such savings.

Security

GM Police have agreed that given the unique nature of the development (environmental, ecological and heritage interests) a reduced/low lighting level strategy would be acceptable,

despite the recommendations of the Crime Impact Statement. This can be agreed by condition.

Conclusion

The proposed development would deliver a major redevelopment scheme at a previously developed site. Subject to appropriate conditions the proposal would not have any unacceptable adverse impacts on heritage interests, visual, neighbouring and general amenity, traffic and highway safety, ecology and biodiversity, drainage and would not be at risk from contamination or be at a security risk. It would also deliver energy efficiency benefits.

The proposal therefore complies with the relevant Oldham Local Plan policies and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve, subject to the following conditions:

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 following approved plans:

Location Plan (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1001-S4-P03)

Site Plan (Proposed) (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1501 S4 P05)

Proposed Roof Plan (Office) (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-03-03-DR-A-1604 S4 P04)

Proposed Floor Plan (Office) (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-03-ZZ-DR-A-1603 S4 P05)

Proposed Elevations (Office) (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-03-ZZ-DR-A-1703 S4 P05)

Proposed Floor Plan (Portal Frame) (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-01-ZZ-DR-A-1601-S4-P04)

Proposed Elevations (Portal Frame) (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-01-ZZ-DR-A-1701-S4-P03)

Proposed Elevations (Glasshouse) (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-02-ZZ-DR-A-1702-S4-P03)

Proposed Floor Plan (Glasshouse) (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-02-ZZ-DR-A-1602-S4-P04)

Context Elevations (Proposed) (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1502-S4-P02)

Landscaping Planting Proposals (Drawing No. 1705/P/01)

Proposed FW/SW Drainage (Drawing No. 60614273-AP-050-001 P2)

Proposed Vehicle Access (Drawing No. 60614273-AP-SK P1)

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

3. The development shall only be carried out in full accordance with the approved remediation proposals outlined in the 'Remediation Strategy & Verification Plan' dated

29 January 2020 (Report No. 3552/02 Issue 2). Should, during the course of the development, any contaminated material other than that referred to in the investigation and risk assessment report and identified for treatment in the remediation proposals be discovered, then the development should cease until such time as further remediation proposals have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the approved measures shall be implemented in full.

Reason - To protect the environment and prevent harm to human health having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

4. Prior to any part of the development hereby approved being occupied, a verification report demonstrating the completion of works set out in the 'Remediation Strategy & Verification Plan' dated 29 January 2020 (Report No. 3552/02 Issue 2) and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to, and approved in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met.

Reason - To ensure that the site does not pose any further risk to human health or the water environment having regard to Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

5. The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the conclusions and recommendations detailed in the flood risk assessment by WSP and dated January 2020. For the avoidance of doubt, the finished floor levels of the buildings shall be:
 - Glasshouse: 166.75 metres above ordnance datum (AOD)
 - Portal Frame Building: 167.22 metres AOD
 - Office: 166.09 metres AOD

Reason - To promote sustainable development, secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution having regard to Policy 19 of the Oldham Local Plan.

6. 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.

7. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan (Drawing No. 1705/p/01) and a phasing programme that shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority prior to the erection of any building. Thereafter, any trees or shrubs which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of five years from the completion of the development shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size, number and species to comply with the approved plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To ensure that the landscaping scheme is carried out and protected in the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the future appearance of the area having regard to Policies 9, 20 and 21 of the Oldham Local Plan, and saved Policy D1.5 of the Unitary Development Plan.

8. No development comprising the erection of any external walls of the glasshouse or office hereby approved shall take place until details of earthworks have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of proposed mounding to existing and proposed vegetation/landscaping and surrounding landform. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To protect visual amenity and the character of the area and to ensure a satisfactory environment having regard to Policies 9 and 20 of the Oldham Local Plan.

9. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the car parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the approved plan (Drawing No. 0372-WSA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1501-S4-P05). Thereafter the parking spaces and turning area shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles.

Reason - To ensure adequate off-street parking facilities are provided and remain available for the development so that parking does not take place on the highway to the detriment of highway safety having regard to Policies 5 and 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

10. Prior to the first occupation of any building hereby approved a scheme for the provision of secure cycle parking shall be 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.

11. Any demolition of building 7 as identified in the extended phase 1 Habitat Survey & Daytime Bat Survey by Rachel Hacking Ecology that would take place between the 1st March and 31st October in any year should be immediately preceded by precautionary bat emergence surveys, the findings of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any demolition works.

Reason - To ensure the protection of species of ecological interest having regard to Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan, and to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

12. Prior to commencement of earthworks, a survey of the site and the areas of Alexandra Park within 30m of the boundary (of the site) for badger setts shall be undertaken. If badgers are found to be present within the survey area, a reasonable avoidance method statement should also be undertaken and with the badger survey shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, earthworks shall be undertaken in full accordance with the approved reasonable avoidance measures.

Reason - To ensure the protection of badgers, which are protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 having regard to Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan.

13. No works to trees shall take place or shrubs or demolition commence 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 or demolition and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To ensure the protection of bird habitats, which are protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 having regard to Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan.

Plan.

14. Prior to any earthworks, a method statement detailing eradication and/or control and/or avoidance measures for himalayan balsam, rhododendron and Cotoneaster spp shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the agreed method statement shall be adhered to and implemented in full unless amendments are otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To prevent the spread of an invasive species having regard to Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan, and to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

15. Bird nesting provision shall be integrated into the fabric of the buildings or installed upon retained trees prior to the use of any building, in accordance with details that shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To ensure the adequate provision of additional bird habitats having regard to Policy 21 of the Oldham Local Plan.

16. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the physical security specifications set out in the Crime Impact Statement dated 14 January 2020 (Report No. 2019/1057/CIS/01 Version A). For the avoidance of doubt, the security lighting shall be implemented in accordance with a scheme that shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority prior to installation.

Reason - To create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion in accordance with Policy 20 of the Oldham Local Plan.

17. No development comprising the construction of the office building shall take place until a detailed energy statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement shall set out how the development will accord with the Energy Infrastructure Target Framework set out in Oldham Local plan Policy 18 and shall detail how a target area has been determined; and how the development will meet this target.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme phasing arrangements and retained as operational thereafter.

Reason - To ensure that the development accords with the provisions of Policy 18 of the Oldham Local Plan.

344412



NOTES: 1. This plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Building Act, 2015. 2. The site boundary is shown in blue. 3. The area highlighted in red is the proposed building footprint. 4. The site plan is subject to the approval of the relevant authorities. 5. The site plan is subject to the approval of the relevant authorities.

— Area of building
— Site boundary




Pre-Design	1/20/20
Design	2/20/20
Construction	3/20/20
Handover	4/20/20

walker simpson architects

Project Name	344412
Client	Walker Simpson Architects
Site	1/20/20
Scale	1:200
Date	20/20/20
Drawn by	W.S.A.

PLANNING COMMITTEE - BACKGROUND PAPERS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PLANNING AND ADVERTISEMENT APPLICATIONS

The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100D (1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents, which would disclose exempt or confidential information defined by that Act.

THE BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. **The appropriate planning application file:** This is a file with the same reference number as that shown on the Agenda for the application. It may contain the following documents:
 - The application forms
 - Plans of the proposed development
 - Certificates relating to site ownership
 - A list of consultees and replies to and from statutory and other consultees and bodies
 - Letters and documents from interested parties
 - A list of OMBC Departments consulted and their replies.
2. **Any planning or advertisement applications:** this will include the following documents:
 - The application forms
 - Plans of the proposed development
 - Certificates relating to site ownership
 - The Executive Director, Environmental Services' report to the Planning Committee
 - The decision notice
3. Background papers additional to those specified in 1 or 2 above or set out below.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. The Adopted Oldham Unitary Development Plan.
2. Development Control Policy Guidelines approved by the Environmental Services (Plans) Sub-Committee.
3. Saddleworth Parish Council Planning Committee Minutes.
4. Shaw and Crompton Parish Council Planning Committee Minutes.

These documents may be inspected at the Access Oldham, Planning Reception, Level 4 (Ground Floor), Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham by making an appointment with the allocated officer during normal office hours, i.e. 8.40 am to 5.00 pm.

Any person wishing to inspect copies of background papers should contact Development Management telephone no. 0161 770 4105.

