

An architectural site plan of a residential development, showing building footprints, roads, green spaces, and a winding water feature. The plan is rendered in a light, semi-transparent style, serving as a background for the document.

urban imprint

Planning statement

17 Victoria Grove, Stockport, SK4 5BU

Avro Homes

June 2022

Urban Imprint Limited

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1. Executive summary

The following plans and drawings are included in this submission:

Title:	Reference:
Site location plan	22-003_dwg_001
Proposed and existing site plan	P1000_Rev D
Existing floorplans	E001_Rev B
Existing elevations	E700_Rev B
Proposed basement floor plan	P001_Rev B
Proposed ground floor plan	P101_Rev B
Proposed first floor plan	P201_Rev C
Proposed second floor plan	P301_Rev B
Proposed roof plan	P600_Rev C
Proposed elevations sheet 1	P700_Rev C
Proposed elevations sheet 2	P701_Rev C
3D massing diagram 1	P703_Rev B
3D massing diagram 2	P704_Rev C
3D massing diagram 3	P705_Rev C
Proposed massing	P706_Rev C

The following additional documents are included in this submission and should be read alongside this report:

Title:	Reference:
Design and access statement	Reece Aaron Architects
Arboricultural Report	PC22/540_Old Oak Tree Care
Tree Constraints Plan	PC22/540/TPP_Old Oak Tree Care
Tree Protection Plan	PC22/540/TCP_Old Oak Tree Care

2. Development context

Proposed development description

- 2.1. This planning statement is provided in support of a planning application for the conversion of 17, Victoria Grove, Heaton Chapel into five two-bedroom apartments. The proposed development involves the work required to restore and convert the dwelling as well as extensions to create additional living space. The proposal includes the provision of five parking spaces, cycle parking and associated access and landscape works.
- 2.2. This planning statement is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement and Arboricultural Report.

Site description

- 2.3. The application site is located on the southern side of Victoria Grove, Heaton Chapel and comprises a period semi-detached property of traditional design and construction. The property is in a poor state of repair with areas of significant water damage internally.
- 2.4. The property has the appearance of two storeys from the front and three storeys from the rear. There is also an existing basement at lower ground level. The dwelling has a pitched roof with a four-storey rear outrigger shared with the attached neighbour. It is constructed from traditional red brick with timber sash windows, detailed window surrounds and decorative cornices.
- 2.5. The site is relatively long and narrow with the land sloping from the front to the rear (north to south). There is a large rear garden that adjoins plots on Rosedale Road along the south boundary. The immediate neighbours are no.19 to the west and no.15 to the east (the adjoining neighbour).
- 2.6. Access to the site is taken from Victoria Grove, with an existing driveway to the right of the dwelling with an area of garden and hardstanding for parking to the front. Within the front garden are located two mature trees which make a positive contribution to the streetscene and will thus be retained.
- 2.7. The site is within an existing built up area, it is not within a conservation area nor is the existing property be considered to be a heritage asset though it does have some architectural merit. There are no protected trees on the site.

A sustainable location

- 2.8. The application site is in a highly accessible location. The site is a seven-minute walk from Heaton Chapel train station where direct trains to Manchester take 10 minutes and run, on average, three times an hour. Direct trains are also available to Stockport, Buxton, Macclesfield and Stoke on Trent.
- 2.9. Heaton Chapel is identified within local planning policy as a large Local Centre and provides a range of local services including a supermarket, pubs, restaurants,

beauticians, hairdressers and a car wash. The School Lane shopping area is five minutes' walk from the site along Wellington Road North. This area of Heaton Chapel is given an accessibility score of 60 within the Core Strategy 2011. A score which in policy supports the provision of flatted accommodation such as is proposed here.

3. Planning policy justification

Relevant policies

- 3.1. The development plan relevant to this application consists of the Stockport Borough Council Core Strategy (2011) and the saved policies of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2009). The Council are preparing a new Local Plan but this is at an early stage of preparation and has not been the subject of any consultation or examination and thus carries no weight. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (as amended 2021) carries significant weight as a material consideration given that all the development plan documents predate the introduction of the NPPF in 2012, and its subsequent updates.
- 3.2. The Council have several supplementary planning documents relevant to this proposal including the Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments SPD (2019), The Design of Residential Development SPD (2007) and Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2012) all of which are a material consideration. The National Design Guide (2019) is also a strong material consideration as it represents government priorities for urban design as part of the planning system.
- 3.3. A full review of the relevant development plan policies and guidance can be found in Appendix B. These policies have been considered through the design process and have collectively shaped the proposed development on this site.

Key policy tests

- 3.4. Following the policy review the key policy tests considered relevant to this planning application are (summarised from appendix B):
 - Principle of development
 - Design and impact on local character
 - Amenity space
 - Amenity impact
 - Highways and parking

Response to tests

- 3.5. The following section sets out how the proposed development meets the identified policy tests.

Principle of development

- 3.6. The principle of residential development in this location is acceptable given that it is within an existing 'Predominantly Residential Area' and retains the current use of the site. The increased density proposed (a change from a single dwellinghouse to five apartments) is considered appropriate within this location due to its excellent

access to transit stops, shops and services in line with paragraph 124 of the Framework.

- 3.7. The site is in a highly accessible location near to a railway station, shops, services and a frequent bus route into Manchester. This sustainability is confirmed within planning policy which gives this location a score of 60 out of 100 using Stockport's accessibility scoring system. In locations that score at least 60, flatted development is considered appropriate. The acceptability of apartments and the resultant increase in housing density, is reflected in local planning decisions. A number of the dwellings on Victoria Grove have been converted into apartments and the street also contains purpose-built apartment buildings, see Appendix A for further detail. This notion of increasing densities is widely encouraged within national policy and weighs heavily in favour of this application.
- 3.8. Policy CS3 Mix of Housing states that the loss of family homes in some locations should be resisted, however, the Council's development plan as a whole has a real focus on improving housing mix and encouraging flats in sustainable locations. There is a preference for two bedroomed flats which this proposal seeks to provide. However, the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply (2.4 years of supply). As a result some key policies that dictate how housing should be delivered can be considered to be out of date, and the Council should look favourably on any application that is able to help deliver their housing supply in line with paragraph 74 of the NPPF.
- 3.9. The existing residential use of the site, it's sustainable location and the proposal to improve the mix of housing locally are all in line with development plan policies. This is in line with the NPPF (paragraphs 124 and 125) which encourages the effective use of land particularly when that land is brownfield, well connected to sustainable transport modes, within a settlement and can be used for residential use. The 2007 Design of Residential Development SPD also encourages the efficient use of land subject to impact on local character – this impact is assessed later within this chapter. This is in line with the NPPF paragraph 125c guidance which sets out that local planning authorities should take a flexible approach in determining planning applications in order to make the most efficient use of land, refusing those that do not seek to take advantage of higher densities. Therefore it is concluded that the principle of the conversion and extension of the existing dwelling to provide five apartments is acceptable.

Design and impact on local character

- 3.10. The proposed development offers the opportunity to make efficient use of land as a direct response to the sustainability of the site and the Council's lack of five year housing land supply. Whilst the principle of this increase in density is appropriate, it is important that the proposal is acceptable in terms of design and makes a positive contribution to local character, key tests are set out within the Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings SPD (2011).
- 3.11. Victoria Grove is not within a conservation area nor is the property a heritage asset, that said the property has architectural merit. This has been carefully considered in

the proposals and the existing character and the property's contribution to the street retained through a carefully composed front elevation.

- 3.12. The additional elements that are visible from the street take their cue from the existing design of the building and seek to complement its existing character whilst seeking to create attractive living environments for each apartment. The two gabled windows in the roof provide additional light to the upper floor. These have been carefully positioned to align with the existing fenestration of the front elevation of the property retaining the overall balance of the elevation. This form works with the existing front to rear pitch of the dwelling.
- 3.13. Further to this, the proposed lightwells to serve the basement apartments have been appropriately screened to limit their visual impact on the streetscene and protect amenity. A retaining wall topped with railings allows sufficient natural light to reach these apartments whilst being reflective of boundaries within the street and visually related to the main building. Notwithstanding this, openings that serve basement rooms are typical of other properties on the street and are visible as part of the principal elevation.
- 3.14. To the rear dormer windows are added to again provide additional light and space within the upper floor. These have been designed to offer a simple form which appears subservient to the existing form of the roof. Windows are again aligned with existing fenestration below.
- 3.15. The materials used throughout the proposal will match those of the existing dwelling including red brick and slate roofing tiles. Decorative features such as cornices and window surrounds are to be retained and replicated where appropriate.
- 3.16. Boundary treatments will be sensitive to the property's age and style. The two trees at the front of the site are important to the character of the street and are to be retained and protected.
- 3.17. Finally, the design seeks to improve the state of repair of the existing property, bringing it back into use and up to modern living standards in terms of energy efficiency in line with the approach outlined in paragraph 64 of the Framework. The design also includes green roofs and garden terraces to provide visual and garden amenity in addition to offering biodiversity benefit. The submitted Design and Access Statement provides additional detail of these measures.

Amenity space

- 3.18. The Design of Residential Development SPD (2007) document contains standards relating to the amount of private amenity space to be provided with different types of residential dwelling. 2 bedroom flats should provide 35 sqm of communal space per unit. The proposed development contains five two bedroom flats thus 175 sqm of amenity space is required. This proposal includes 230 sqm of communal amenity space. This is in addition to private amenity space provided as terraces for flats 1, 2, 3, and 5 which have 14.6 sqm, 22 sqm, 15.44 sqm and 2 sqm of outside space each

respectively. The proposal therefore exceeds the provision required and aims to provide a range of good quality shared and private space for residents to enjoy.

Amenity impact

- 3.19. The proposal has been designed in order to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties and future occupants of the apartments. In that regard care has been taken to design a scheme mindful of the relationship with each of the two neighbouring properties, and those to the rear. Each neighbour is considered in turn below.
- 3.20. There are habitable room windows within the side elevation of number 19 that appear to be serving a living room window (on the ground floor) and two bedroom windows on the first and second floors. The Residential Design Guide states that there should be a minimum of 12m between the window of a habitable room and a blank elevation or window to a non-habitable room. The proposal therefore ensures these distances are met whilst providing light into the windows of the proposed flats 3 and 5. This has been achieved with the addition of a bay window feature (with side facing windows only) to the side elevation. This provides an architectural feature which not only complements the existing character of the building but ensures the amenity of future occupants or those who occupy number 19 is not compromised.
- 3.21. The amenity of the attached property, number 15, has been considered through careful placement of screens beside garden terraces serving flats 3 and 5. These vegetative screens will add aesthetic and biodiversity value to the scheme whilst acting as protection to the privacy of the neighbouring property and proposed residents. The position of the extension has been designed to limit the impact on the neighbour and ensure their access to daylight and aspect is not harmed. This is helped, in part, by the property's open southern aspect. The result is a stepped rear extension which protects neighbour amenity whilst creating attractive private outdoor amenity space for occupants of the proposed development. This arrangement is similar to the design of existing extensions on the same road, notably 2A Victoria Grove (planning ref DC/054572 - see appendix A).
- 3.22. The property to the immediate rear of the site, 26 Rosedale Road, sides on to the rear garden of 17 Victoria Grove and has only non-habitable windows facing the site. The length of the garden also means that the amenity distances are all exceeded. Therefore there is no negative amenity impact on the existing neighbouring property.

Highways and parking

- 3.23. Stockport's highways standards require a maximum of two spaces per dwelling. The standards also require one lockable cycle parking space per unit. Due to the sustainable location of the site one space per unit is provided as it is expected that occupants will make use of excellent nearby transport services whilst there cycle spaces have been provided entirely in accordance with the standards. The parking and cycle spaces have been provided in clusters to the front and rear of the

property. This breaks up the amount of hardstanding for parking and enables the front garden to remain largely grassed to provide an appropriate setting for the two mature trees which front the site. A wider parking space is provided to the rear to offer a space suitable for someone with reduced mobility.

- 3.24. Access to the site from Victoria Grove largely remains as existing however, the entrance to the site will be marginally widened whilst ensuring the existing mature trees are protected.
- 3.25. A bin store is provided to the front of the site, but screened behind existing planting, to enable easy street collection and refuse and recycling provision for residents.

4. Planning balance

Overall balance

- 4.1. This planning application seeks permission for the conversion and extension of 17 Victoria Grove to create five two-bedroom apartments. The proposal makes efficient use of the site whilst ensuring the design is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the character of the street.
- 4.2. The sustainability of the site and the Council's lack of housing land supply go further in reinforcing the message within the Framework that in such areas higher densities should be achieved.
- 4.3. The proposal seeks to provide high quality living environment for future occupants whilst carefully avoiding any harm to neighbouring properties' amenity. It is therefore respectfully requested that this application be approved without delay. 

5. Appendix A – Local planning activity

Planning ref	Location	Description	Decision date	Reasons / key issues
DC/0725 50	21 Victoria Grove Heaton Chapel Stockport SK4 5BU	Conversion of existing basement to form 1 no. apartment, including rear extension, raised patio and balustrade to side/rear, with associated access visibility improvements, parking, hard and soft landscaping and bin storage	Granted Mon 22 Jul 2019	Approved at planning committee. The dwelling comprised three flats already. The proposed flat has two bedrooms and was served by two parking spaces.
DC/0545 72	2A Victoria Grove Heaton Chapel Stockport SK4 5BU	Convert lower ground floor basement, single storey side extension to create a separate flat. (re-submission of DC053980)	Granted Wed 19 Mar 2014	
DC/0528 73	8 Victoria Grove Heaton Chapel Stockport SK4 5BU	Extensions to side/rear of property at basement and ground floor level to include balcony and raised patio.	Granted Thu 01 Aug 2013	Similar extensions proposed to the rear of the property to accommodate lower ground floor units.
DC/0477 39	14 Victoria Grove Heaton Chapel Stockport SK4 5BU	Change of use planning permission from 7 flat units to 1 dwelling and a flank extension to the kitchen and elevated patio to rear. Amended - provision of solid obscure glazed privacy screen to a minimum height of 1.8 metres from the floor level of the raised patio to run the entire depth of the raised patio.	Granted Mon 07 Nov 2011	Property previously was split into 7 units
DC/0164 79	21 Victoria Grove Stockport Cheshire SK4 5BU	Lawful development certificate for the creation of a third flat from two existing flats	Granted Mon 20 Sep 2004	Property had four flats, this permission merged two of the units into one
DC/0001 32	Land Adjacent To 6 Victoria Grove Heaton Chapel Stockport Cheshire	Erection of three storey residential block to form 12 two bedroom flats with construction of new vehicular access to and relocation of existing bollards in Victoria Grove	Refused Fri 05 Jan 2001	Refused due to significant loss of trees (some protected by TPOs) and lack of provision of amenity space
J/51625	4 Victoria Grove Heaton Chapel	Conversion of semi-detached house into two properties.	Granted Wed 27 Feb 1991	
J/44786	4 Victoria Grove Heaton Chapel Stockport.	Change of use of semi-detached house into 4 self-contained flats, including extensions.	Granted Thu 04 May 1989	

6. Appendix B – Relevant policies and guidance

Stockport Borough Council Core Strategy (2011)

Policy title	Description
SD1 – Creating sustainable communities	Development which is demonstrated to assist in the creation of sustainable communities will be supported. Proposals for high energy saving ratings will be looked upon favourably.
SD2 - Making improvements to existing dwellings	The installation of energy efficiency measures in existing dwellings is encouraged. The Council have a tool, the 'Energy Efficiency Checklist' with which this proposal complies.
CS2 - Housing provision	Stockport seeks to deliver 7200 homes between 2011 and 2026 (the plan period). The Council confirmed in February 2021 that they can only demonstrate a 2.6 year supply of housing. This means there is a need for housing in the area.
CS3 – Mix of housing	The development plan encourages the provision of a range of housing types and new development should contribute to improving this mix. 50% of the new homes created across the plan period should be flats and the majority of those should contain two bedrooms. However, the policy also states that existing family houses should be retained in suburban areas and not converted to flats.
H1 – Design of residential development	Proposals should be of a high quality, inclusive, sustainable and contribute to successful communities. The design should relate to the local townscape and landscape and reinforce local identity. Low carbon housing is encouraged as are good standards of amenity and privacy. Further guidance is available in the Design of Residential Development and Sustainable Design & Construction SPD.
H2 – Housing phasing	This policy applies when the Council can demonstrate a five year housing land supply, which it currently can not. However, outlines intentions for where new housing should be located. Housing should be on sites which score 50 in the accessibility model (following policy). Flats need to be in a location which scores at least 60. These scores may be lowered if a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated. In other accessible locations housing will be permitted if it reuses vacant land or buildings, reuses a locally listed building, provides at least 50% affordable housing, provides specialist housing. There is a preference for previously developed sites.
H3 – Affordable housing	In areas where house prices are above the borough average affordable housing should be provided when 5 or more dwellings are proposed. In Heaton Chapel (a moderate area) the requirement is 20-25%.
CS6 – Service centre hierarchy	Heaton Chapel is identified as a Local Centre
T1 – Transport and development	Cycle parking needs to be provided within all new developments in line with Council standards.
T2 – Parking in developments	Parking provision to be in line with the Council's standards (2006). These require no more than two spaces to be provided per dwelling. If there is no garage available then lockable cycle storage is also required.

The Design of Residential Development SPD (2007)

Relevant section/paragraph	Description
Making best use of land and buildings	Efficient use is to be made of land subject to consideration of the impact on local character.
Contributing to townscape and landscape character	<p>Proposals should respond to local character and identity through an appraisal of local context and consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard and soft landscaping - Spaciousness and visual separation between buildings - Boundary treatments - Pattern of existing access points - Roof forms and lines - Architectural styles - Materials and construction methods - Frontage composition - the arrangement of detailing and fenestration
Detailing	Bin and recycling storage and collection facilities to be detailed in proposals. Flatted developments of over 7 units are encouraged to use Eurobins.
Space about dwellings	There should be 12m between a habitable room window and a blank elevation or elevation with non-habitable rooms. If at 3 storeys or more then 3m is to be added to this distance.
Providing private amenity space	<p>The Council have standards for private amenity space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 bed flat = 5sqm balcony and/or communal space 18sqm per unit - 2 bed+ flat = 35 sqm communal space per unit
Redeveloping the sites of existing dwellings	Expresses the need to strike a balance between maintaining positive character and the need for additional housing

Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings SPD (2011)

Relevant section/paragraph	Description
6.3 Rear extensions	<p>Sets out that rear extensions should respect the shape and form of the existing dwelling with a roof design that complements the appearance of the existing dwelling. Flat roofs are generally unlikely to be acceptable, an exception to this could be the provision of a green roof.</p> <p>Two storey rear extensions or first floor rear extensions should be avoided where they would be sited adjacent to a party boundary, particularly on the south facing side. It explains that individual circumstances will influence the acceptability of such extensions but ideally they should be sited away from the boundary to consider the outlook of neighbouring properties and overshadowing.</p>
6.5 Roof extensions / dormers	<p>Be designed to be in proportion to the roof and set into the roof slope so that they are not a dominant feature, small dormers set below the existing ridge line are likely to be more acceptable.</p> <p>Echo the window design and attempt to align vertically with the fenestration below.</p> <p>Be constructed from materials to match the existing roof. i.e clad in tiles / slates matching the colour and texture of the existing roof.</p> <p>Dormers clad in UPVC or board are unlikely to be acceptable. Not result in undue overlooking of a neighbouring property.</p>
6.10 Sustainability and Energy	<p>Encourages development to incorporate sustainable design and construction methods. This includes improving the energy efficiency of the building, exploiting solar heat gain and maximising use of natural daylight. It also uses the example of green roofs as a good use of otherwise wasted roof area to create viable green space for biodiversity</p>

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Relevant section/paragraph	Description
119	Sets out the national agenda to promote development that makes more efficient use of land in meeting the need for homes.
120	Sets out that planning decisions must give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes. They should also promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially where this would assist in meeting identified needs for housing.
124	In achieving appropriate densities, planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land. This should take into account the identified need for different types of housing, how this can promote sustainable modes of transport and the availability of infrastructure and services. Furthermore, these decisions should also consider the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.
130	Directs that decisions must ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area. They should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; be sympathetic to local character while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change such as increased densities; establish or maintain a strong sense of place; optimise the potential of the site; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible with a high standard of amenity.



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