



CASTLETON LIBRARY & COMMUNITY CENTRE

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Produced by Triangle Architects Ltd.
On behalf of Rochdale Borough Council
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INTRODUCTION

This heritage statement has been prepared on behalf of Rochdale Borough Council and supports their submission of a full planning application for the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and associated equipment/ boundary enclosure works at Castleton Library and Community Centre, Manchester Road, Rochdale, OL11 3AF.

The proposals for the heat pumps at this facility form part of Rochdale Borough Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's environmental vision to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions of public sector buildings within the city region. It has an ambitious objective of becoming carbon neutral by 2038, ahead of the government's current target of 2050.

During the planning application validation process, it was deemed by Planning/ Conservation Officers that the building merited being recognised as a non-designated heritage asset. This document identifies and describes the significance and setting of this heritage asset and will assess the impact of the proposals on it.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Rochdale Core Strategy (2016) and the saved policies of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006) are relevant.

Rochdale Core Strategy (2016)

Policy P2 relates to protecting and enhancing landscape character, landscape and heritage. With regard to heritage, the aims are:

- a) *Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non- statutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:*
 - i. *Four outstanding conservation areas: Central Rochdale, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and Rock Nook / Summit;*
 - ii. *Other designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments;*
 - iii. *The heritage of the Co-operative movement, the Rochdale Pioneers and the Labour movement;*
 - iv. *The Edgar Wood and J. H. Sellers cultural heritage;*
 - v. *The heritage of the seventeenth and eighteenth century vernacular tradition; and*
 - vi. *The engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways.*
- b) *Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration;*
- c) *Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and*

- d) *Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard.*

Paragraph 9.15 states that:

“Designated and non-designated heritage assets must be conserved in accordance with their significance and the relevant national guidance, standards and good practice guides. The value of heritage assets in terms of their contribution to place making, image, tourism, regeneration and the economy, culture, education and social cohesion will be informed by Historic Environmental Records (HERs) and Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLCA) as well as other studies and information and the views of local communities. An up to date set of conservation area appraisals will be maintained to which potential developers should refer when developing their proposals in these locations.”

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

In determining applications, NPPF **Paragraph 200** states that Local Planning Authorities *“should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.”*

Paragraph 201 of the revised Framework advises Local Planning Authorities to *“identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”*

Paragraph 197 of the updated NPPF states when determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should take account of *“a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*

Paragraph 209 states that *“the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”*

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- Heritage Category: Non-Designated Heritage Asset
- Grade: N/A
- List Entry Number: N/A
- Date First Identified as NDHA: Assumed March 2024
- Address: Castleton Library and Community Centre, Manchester Road, Rochdale, OL11 3AF
- History: Castleton Library and Community Centre first appeared on Ordinance Survey historic maps dated 1892-1914 and 1888 -1915, noted initially as a School adjacent Jermyn Street (now Keswick Street). The adjacent Baths were not constructed at that time. The building continued to be identified as a school on OS Maps until the mid-1960s, by which time the terrace of houses on Knoll Street had appeared facing its rear elevation and Baths to the north. The building was re-purposed as a Community Centre (understood to be approx. 2007, with direct evidence of Community use from 2008). The Library function was included following the closure of Carnegie Library in 2006.



Figure 1. 1892 – 1914 OS Map (25 Inch) [Credit: National Library of Scotland]

The significance of this non-designated heritage asset derives from its historic and cultural importance as an Edwardian-era school, and subsequent repurposing as a local Community Centre and Library. The following historic photos (figures 2-3) show the original school before it was closed. The subsequent images show the building in its current state:



Figure 2. Postcard Photograph dated approx. 1910 [Credit: T.Pinder Original Photo, Jack Stasiak - Ebay seller]



Figure 3. Castleton Junior School – photo dated May 2004 with anecdotal reference to school closing in 2007. [Credit: Dr. Neil Clifton – www.geograph.org.uk]



Figure 4. Google Streetview captured May 2023.



Figure 5. Photograph of Knoll Street elevation taken February 2024 [©Triangle Architects]



Figure 5. Photograph of Manchester Road elevation taken February 2024 [©Triangle Architects]



Figure 6. Photograph of Knoll Street elevation taken February 2024 [©Triangle Architects]

Externally, the building is a large red brick Edwardian building built in the early 1900s. The building was built using traditional materials comprising red brickwork and slate roof coverings. Some of the key features throughout the building are projecting gables and brick piers (buttresses), stone parapet copings/ windows surrounds and large window openings. Similar to the style of the time, the west facade is typically less ornate than the east-facing elevation, given it was originally rear-facing towards fields behind (see OS Historic Map above). Ad-hoc poor-quality brick extensions have been added to the building over time, notably on the corner of Keswick Street and Manchester Road, and also to the north elevation fronting the adjacent Baths (Castleton Health & Leisure Centre). Similarly, poor quality metal railings and rotating security spikes have been added to help reduce anti-social behaviour and trespassing onto the roof.

The planning application proposals recognise the key features mentioned above and is well considered with the siting of the proposed ASHP enclosure along the less detailed western elevation. It is sited adjacent an existing bin store and plantroom – the timber enclosure screens the heat pumps from view and does not conflict with the more prominent north/ east/ south elevations. There is no impact on the prominent Manchester Road elevation or its setting alongside the historic Baths.



Figure 7. Internal Photograph of Community Hall taken February 2024 [©Triangle Architects]

The community centre is well-used by the local community but is in significant need of modernisation and redecoration. There are few internal features of the building that are of architectural or historic merit. Original exposed trusses are evident within the halls / community rooms but have been hidden above suspended grid ceilings in other rooms (e.g library). There have been several unsympathetic alterations and additions over time, and original doors/ internal features removed throughout.



Figures 8 & 9. Internal Photographs showing poor-quality alterations, including additional internal corridor, low grade fire doors, grid ceiling, and evidence of water penetration. [©Triangle Architects]

LISTED BUILDINGS

The nearest listed buildings to Castleton Community Centre and Library are:

- United Reformed Church (Grade II), now Castleton Holyrood Nurseries, Heywood Road (400m away).
- Arrow Vale Mill (Grade II), Queensway (500m+ away).
- Royal Canal Lock Number 52 and Towpath Bridge (Grade II), Bridge Street (600m + away).

There is no interface between the setting of these Listed buildings/ structures and Castleton Community Centre and Library.

CONSERVATION AREAS

The building is not located within a Conservation Area. The northern edge of Castleton South Conservation Area is located some 250m+ away to the south of the site. No assessment of its significance is therefore required.



Figure 9. Nearby listed Buildings (Yellow dot) and Conservation Area (green hatch) [www.planning.data.gov.uk]

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

It has been established through pre-application discussions that Rochdale MBC consider the building to be a non-designated heritage asset. The application must therefore be considered against paragraph 209 of the NPPF and Policy P2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy (2016).

The significance of this building derives from its historic importance as an Edwardian-era school and its cultural importance for its latter use as a public Community Centre and Library. Later alterations to the building, including poor-quality extensions/ external security features/ bin stores have detracted from its significance somewhat. Its setting fronting Manchester Road and its historic context with Castleton Baths remains important and are unaffected by proposals.

Much of the internal fabric of the building has been fundamentally changed and/or removed over the years and is of little historic, cultural or architectural value to warrant retention. Nor do we believe that this is a key reason for its NDHA designation.

The proposal respects the buildings designation as a non-designated heritage asset and the heat pump enclosure location on the rear façade fronting the car park offers a limited alteration to the buildings context. This can easily be removed in future without significant impact on its architectural character. The significant benefit of proposals to upgrade the internal fabric of the building will help extend the buildings lifespan and maintain its community function, alongside fixing the leaking roof(s) to prevent further water-ingress. The reduced energy-use and decarbonisation of the building will help maintain the facility as a viable Community Centre for the public to access, with a significant public benefit to the community in Castleton and beyond.

Policy P2 confirms that “...non-designated heritage assets must be conserved in accordance with their significance and the relevant national guidance, standards and good practice guides”. Similarly, it supports “Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration”.

The proposal offers a sympathetic but proportionate response in bringing the building up to modern standards including:

- Upgrading the mechanical and electrical systems to modern standards to help reduce carbon/ energy consumption.
- Locating external mechanical equipment in an area that limits its effect on the more prominent Manchester Road elevation(s) and the buildings historic setting with Castleton Baths.
- Improving the fire-safety of the building with replacement high-quality fire doors to replace the existing, alongside works to ceilings to ensure adequate fire compartmentation between rooms.
- Sensitive restoration and refurbishment of the existing roof to limit weather ingress into the building.

The retention of the building through its sensitive renovation and refurbishment will mean that it can be retained as a community asset for the people of Castleton. The above benefits would be lost if the proposed development is not approved by Rochdale MBC and the required fire safety / fabric enhancements/ M&E upgrades not incorporated. On the basis that its impact is carefully considered, we believe that the proposals accord with Policy P2 and that the Council should therefore support the proposals.

COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL GUIDANCE

Paragraph 209 of NPPF confirms that a “a balanced judgement” will be required, having regard to direct impacts on non-designated heritage assets. This is clearly a less stringent test compared to how designated heritage asset harm is treated and offers decision makers a more balanced approach.

Regardless, proposals seek to retain and enhance Castleton Community Centre & Library and offers a sympathetic means to do so, with minimal alterations to the external elevations bar acoustic screening of the proposed heat pumps. No loss to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset arises and the proposal complies with the Framework.

A presumption in favour, detailed in paragraph 11 of the Framework, applies and the proposals should be approved without delay.

CONCLUSION

This Statement has assessed the significance and setting of a non-designated heritage asset and the potential impact that proposals may have on its heritage value.

The significance of this building derives from its historic importance as an Edwardian-era school and its latter cultural importance as a publicly accessible Community Centre and Library. Later alterations to the building, including poor-quality extensions/ external security features/ bin stores have detracted from its significance somewhat.

The building is more than 400m from other listed buildings and over 250m from Castleton South Conservation Area. There is no direct interface between their respective settings and the proposals will not impact on designated heritage assets in the vicinity.

The starting point for any assessment into the impact of the proposals must be set against the existing position. The building has evident degradation due to weather-ingress, its internal fire safety requires upgrade and its decarbonisation/ reduced energy consumption will allow it to be retained as a community asset for Castleton.

The internal appearance of the building is of little historic, cultural, or architectural value to warrant retention. This has been fundamentally changed over the years and is not believed to be a key reason for its local listing. Rather, its sensitive refurbishment and fabric enhancements are a viable means to secure its external appearance.

As such, the proposals comply with Policy P2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy (2016) and paragraph 209 of the NPPF. The presumption in favour detailed in paragraph 11 of the Framework is triggered; the Council should therefore approve this proposal without delay.

For the above reasons we believe that the applications should be supported on heritage grounds.