

Heritage Statement

Land at Wildhouse Court, Wildhouse Lane, Milnrow

January 2024



adapt heritage

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Adapt Heritage on behalf of Mike and Christine Morris (the 'Applicants') in connection with a full planning application for the construction of one residential dwelling with associated access and landscaping (the 'Proposed Development') at Land at Wildhouse Court, Wildhouse Lane, Milnrow (the 'Application Site').

1.2 The Application Site is located adjacent to the Grade II Listed Wildhouse Farm and is proximate to two non-designated heritage assets.

1.3 Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Rochdale Borough Council (the 'Council'), in determining the full planning application, has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special interest they may possess (s.66). The meaning of 'preservation' in this context, as informed by case law, is taken to be the avoidance of harm.

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, Paragraph 200 states the following:

*"In determining applications, 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."*¹

1.5 The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 identifies the relevant heritage assets with potential to be affected by the Proposed Development.
- Section 3 provides an overview of the history and development of the Application Site and the surrounding area.
- Section 4 proportionately assesses the significance of relevant heritage assets and the contribution made by setting and the Application Site.
- Section 5 provides an assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development in light of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF and local planning policy (set out in detail at **Appendix 1**).
- Section 6 sets out the summary and conclusions.

1.6 The assessment has been undertaken on the basis of existing published information, proportionate archival research and on-site visual survey in January 2024. It has been produced in accordance with guidance set out in Historic England's Advice Notes including:

- Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015);
- Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017); and
- Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019).



¹ DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

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2. The Heritage Assets

Context

- 2.1 Annex 2 of the NPPF (2023) defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.”²

- 2.2 A site visit was undertaken in December 2023 to identify designated and non-designated heritage assets with potential to be affected by the Proposed Development.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.3 Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of heritage interest that justifies designation under relevant legislation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions that involve them.

Listed Buildings

- 2.4 A review of the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) in December 2023 and January 2024 confirms that there is only one listed building proximate to the Application Site:

Name	Grade	Designation Date	List Entry
Wildhouse Farm	II	23 April 1986	1096988

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.5 The NPPF identifies that heritage assets include both designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). Historic England's guidance on 'Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment' (2015) states that:

“Non-designated heritage assets include those that have been identified in a Historic Environment Record, in a local plan, through local listing or during the process of considering the application.”³

Rochdale Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.6 Rochdale Borough Council maintains a list of non-designated heritage assets within the area which was last updated on Wednesday 28 June 2023. These assets have been identified based upon the following criteria set by the Council:

- **Architectural significance** - sites that demonstrate local architectural style and character or are associated with a local architect, designer or engineer of importance.
- **Historical significance** - sites associated with a local historical event, that have importance as a community asset, are associated with local famous or notable people or appear on the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey Map.
- **Positive contribution** - such as a landmark or as part of a key view.
- **Designed landscape** - asset is a component of a designed landscape.

²

DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

³

Historic England (2015) Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking



2.7 As of January 2024, there are two formally recognised non-designated heritage assets proximate to the Application Site which have the potential to be affected:

Street Name	Name and Address of Asset	Type of Asset
Wildhouse Lane	Bellavista Restaurant, Wildhouse Lane, Milnrow	Commercial
Wildhouse Lane	Wildhouse Court, Wildhouse Lane, Milnrow	Residential

2.8 The above non-designated heritage assets are assessed further within this report.



3. The Application Site and the Surrounding Area

Location and Context

- 3.1 The Application Site (Figure 3.1) is located off Wildhouse Lane to the north of Milnrow. To the north is Wildhouse Court (non-designated heritage asset), beyond which is the Grade II Listed Wildhouse Farm and Bellavista Restaurant (non-designated heritage asset). To the west are mature trees and open fields. To the east is a small parcel of land and Wildhouse Lane. To the south are modern residential houses.



Figure 3.1: The Application Site © Google Maps (2024)

- 3.2 The Application Site itself consists of open vacant land which slopes downwards from the east to the west. There are no defined boundaries or trees on the site.

Overview of Historic Development

- 3.3 Below is an overview of the historic development of the Application Site and the surrounding area. It has been informed by proportionate archival research, historic map regression and a review of existing published sources.
- 3.4 The area of 'Wild House' or 'Wildhouse' is first described in Butterworth's 'An Historical and Topographical Account of the Town and Parish of Rochdale' from 1828.⁴ It notes the following:

"... Pursuing our journey in the direction of Littleboro' we come to a place called Wild House, the ancient mansion once the residence of the family of Wild. Henry de Wild, a member of this family occurs in charters of the age of Henry the sixth, but ascending still higher we find mention of a Thomas de Wild in 1284.

The family of Wild is now very extensively branched out over all this country, and the once ancient mansion of this family is in the occupation of a farmer. It is an antiquated and plain stone fabric, with gables in front, according to the manner of building at that period to which we may refer the erection, which I suppose may be about the time of William the third, certainly not much earlier, two funereal yew trees are planted near the house, which is situated about half a mile north east of Milnrow..."⁵

- 3.5 The former house of 'Wildhouse' is illustrated on an historic engraving from c.1840s (Figure 3.2). It shows the building with pitched gables at each end, with an off-centre entrance with two storey porch and a central chimneystack. It includes numerous mullion and transom windows with hoodmoulds.

4

Butterworth, James (1828) An Historical and Topographical Account of Rochdale.

5

Butterworth, James (1828) An Historical and Topographical Account of Rochdale.





Figure 3.2: Engraving of Former Wildhouse House c.1840s © Henry Fishwick⁶

- 3.6 The Application Site and the surrounding area is illustrated on the 1851 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.3, overleaf) which shows it consisting of predominantly open land next to 'Wildhouse'. To the north are a collection of buildings which includes the former house of Wildhouse (orientated at an angle) and supporting buildings (aligning the road) to the north and south. The land surrounding the Application Site consists of open grassed land and footpaths.



Figure 3.3: Ordnance Survey of Wildhouse surveyed in 1844-1848 and published in 1851 © National Library of Scotland

⁶

Fishwick, Henry (1889) The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster



- 3.7 The Wildhouse area is described again in Fishwick's 'The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster' from 1889.⁷ It includes an overview of the former occupants of the house between the 14th and 18th centuries. This is described as follows:

*"...A little to the south of Birchinley stands the picturesque looking building called Wildhouse; its many gables, deep mullioned windows, large porch with chamber over it and its general appearance are all indicative of considerable antiquity. Inside it has been greatly altered of late years, but it still contains some old wainscotting, and the position of the old open fireplace may be traced..."*⁸

...In the fourteen century, if not earlier, a family called Wild was settled in Butterworth. The names of William de Wylde, Thomas de Wylde and Henry de Wylde all appear as attesting witnesses to charter (without date) confirming lands in Rochdale to Stanlawe and the Parish Church and in 1284 Thomas de Wyld granted to William, son of Richard del Cliff, an annual rental of vi.d. arising from certain lands in Gartside which he had received from Andrew de Gartside, for which he was to pay rent of one arrow of iron yearly, and in 1326 William son of Thomas de Wylde de Butterworth exchanged lands with William de Butterworth, which lands he had in exchange with Thomas the son of Geoffrey de Tumagh. Beyond the fact that such a family lived in Butterworth there is no evidence to show the Wildhouse took its name from its early owner, although it is beyond dispute that in Edward III [1328-9] the then owner of the estate paid xv. d. yearly to Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, for all service and demand....

...Henry Butterworth of Wyld House died and his son, Ralph Butterworth, was then aged five years; 'he appears to have died without issue and the estate went to his nephew Ralph (son of Butterworth) whose son, Henry Butterworth, on 23rd June, 1581, conveyed Wildhouse to feoffees in trust for his

son, Ralph Butterworth, who in 1626 was living there and held with the house 19 acres of land. He had, before 1608, married Elizabeth, a daughter of Edward Newbold of Newbold....

...Amongst the freeholders of Lancashire in 1600 appears Ralph Butterworth de Wyldhouse, gentleman. He married Alice, a daughter of Edward Buckley of Whitfield Hall, Crompton, and died in 1628. He had issue: (1) Henry, of whom presently; (2) Ralph, who married Janet, daughter of John Butterworth, of Low House; (3) Mary, who married James son of John Halliwell of Pike House. Henry Butterworth the son of Ralph married Elizabeth daughter of John Halliwell of Pike House and had issue only one son (who died in infancy) and two daughters, viz., Jane, who married Richard Schofield of Newbold 4 in 1683, and Mary, who became the wife of Samuel, son and heir of Edmund Hamer of Hamer. Through this marriage Wildhouse passed to the Hamers, several of whom lived there....

...In 1759 the trustees of the late Samuel Hamer sold the estate to Laurence Ashworth of Newbold, woolstapler, whose executors in 1765 again sold it to the Rev. Joseph Haigh, curate of Milnrow, who twenty years afterwards conveyed it to John Gorell of Wellfield Hall, Rochdale, gentleman, and his executors in 1796 sold it to Messrs. John, James, and Joseph Fenton of Crimble, woollen manufacturers. It now belongs to James Fenton of Ribchester, Esq....

*.... A few years ago, two very fine yew trees stood near the house which is now let to the tenant farmer. It was probably re-built in the time of James I."*⁹

- 3.8 As set out above, Fishwick's publication confirms that Wildhouse was owned by 'James Fenton of Ribchester' in 1889 and was leased to a tenant farmer during this time.

⁷
⁸

Fishwick, Henry (1889) The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster
Fishwick, Henry (1889) The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster

⁹

Fishwick, Henry (1889) The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster



- 3.9 The 1893 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.4) shows no changes to the Application Site and the surrounding area by this time. The aforementioned sources confirm that the building was utilised as a farmhouse by the late 19th century. Census records also indicate it may have been subdivided around this time or in the early 20th century.



Figure 3.4: Ordnance Survey of Wildhouse surveyed in 1891 and published in 1893 © National Library of Scotland

- 3.10 The collection of buildings at Wildhouse Farm are illustrated on an historic photograph from c.1900 (Figure 3.5) which shows the former house, dwelling and barn to the south and further barns to the north. It shows the route of the road and the farm complex abutting against it. The Application Site is out of view from this photograph.



Figure 3.5: Photograph of Wildhouse Farm c.1900

- 3.11 The Application Site is illustrated on the 1910 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.6) and the 1930 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.7). These both show the site as consisting of open grassed areas with a footpath running across the south and west boundaries. The 1910 mapping shows that a collection of buildings was constructed to the rear of the southern barn complex, but these were demolished by 1930. Similarly, the 1930 mapping shows other buildings between the barn and the Application Site.



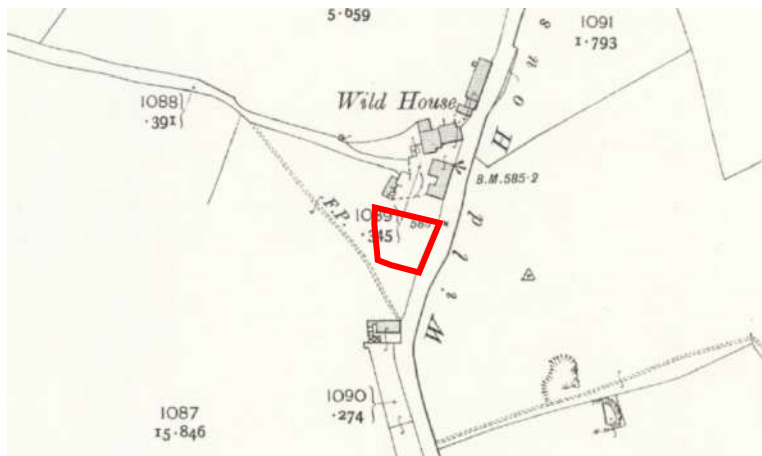


Figure 3.6: Ordnance Survey of Wildhouse surveyed in 1907 and published in 1910 © National Library of Scotland



Figure 3.7: Ordnance Survey of Wildhouse surveyed in 1928 and published in 1930 © National Library of Scotland

- 3.12 The Application Site is shown again on the 1947 Ordnance Survey (Figure 4.8) and confirms there are no changes to the site or the surrounding area. The route of Wild House Lane remains to the south east as well as the footpath to the south west.

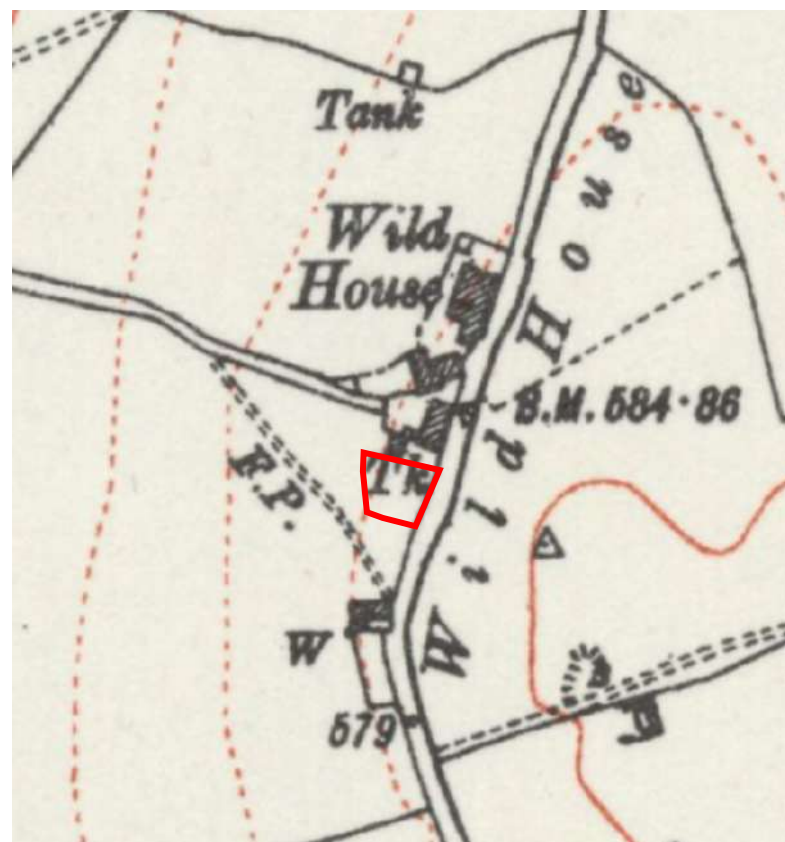


Figure 3.8: Ordnance Survey of Wildhouse surveyed in 1938 and published in 1947 © National Library of Scotland





Figure 3.9: RAF Aerial Photograph of Wildhouse, May 1953 © Historic England (Ref: RAF_82_775_vp2_0252)

- 3.13 The 1953 RAF Aerial Photograph (Figure 3.9) provides an overview of the Application Site and the surrounding area. It shows the site as predominantly open and grassed but with some stores and/or vehicles on part of the area. This indicates that there were some functional and historic connections between the farmstead complex and the Application Site. The footpath is evident along the south western boundary.

- 3.14 In the mid to late 20th century, the route of Wild House Lane was re-aligned further to the east and enlarged. The original route became an access route to the various properties of Wild House farm, the Application Site, and other residential dwellings. During this time, the barn to the north was converted into a restaurant ('Bellavista') with numerous alterations and additions added to the building.

- 3.15 Around the same time, the former house of Wild House appears to have been partially demolished and the western elevation rebuilt or heavily reconfigured to provide a new frontage to the west. The double storey porch was also removed. Modern UPVC windows were also added, and chimneystacks removed. This has diminished the overall character of the building.

- 3.16 The buildings to the south, originally a worker house with adjoining barn, were converted into residential uses which has result in various alterations and changes. This includes new extensions, new windows and openings and rendering of the facades. A modern garage building was also constructed between these buildings and the Application Site, together with new laid out garden areas for the converted buildings. The Application Site became overgrown during this time.





3.17 As found today, the Application Site remains as open vacant land and has recently been cleared from vegetation (Figures 3.10 and 3.11). It is separated from the surrounding land to the west and south by intervening trees and planting. It is also separated to the north by modern garaging and garden areas.



Figures 3.10 & 3.11: Aerial Photographs of the Application Site and Surrounding Area (2023)



4. Assessment of Significance

Significance and Special Interest

- 4.1 The NPPF (2023) defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”¹⁰

Listed Buildings

- 4.2 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold architectural or historic interest. The principles of selection for listed buildings are published by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport¹¹ and supported by Historic England’s Listing Selection Guides for each building typology.

Setting

- 4.3 The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”¹²

- 4.4 Historic England has published guidance in respect of the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated

assessment of the impact of any changes. It confirms that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, rather its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the relevant heritage asset itself.

- 4.5 Further guidance on the definition of setting and how it should be taken into account is set out in national Planning Practice Guidance. In assessing the contribution of setting to the significance of the following identified heritage assets the role of the Application Site has also been considered.

Assessment

- 1.1 As set out earlier, the following assessments are proportionate to the significance of the relevant listed buildings and the nature and scale of the Proposed Development. It has been informed by published information, desktop archival research and on-site visual survey.
- 4.6 The assessments have been produced in accordance with following guidance set out in Historic England’s Advice Notes including:
- Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015);
 - The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017); and
 - Statements of Heritage Significance (2019).

¹⁰

DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary
¹¹ DDCMS (2018) Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings

¹²

Historic England (2017) Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets



Wildhouse Farm (Grade II Listed)



Figure 4.1: Front Elevation to Wildhouse Farm (2023)

Special Architectural or Historic Interest

- 4.7 Wildhouse Farm (Figure 4.1) holds special architectural and historic interest as an early to mid 17th century house, likely with older origins, with later 19th and 20th century alterations and rebuilding. It was originally one large house but was later divided into three separate residential dwellings in the 20th century. The building holds historic interest through its connections with the Wild family who are known to have resided in this area from at least the 14th century.¹³
- 4.8 Archival research and analysis of the listed building indicates that the original plan form included gabled cross-wings at each end although the

western end has since been rebuilt. This also resulted in the loss of the double storey porch as illustrated at Figure 3.2.

- 4.9 The building is two storeys and constructed from stone with a graduated stone slate roof. At one side is a pitched gable with stone kneelers. The original mullion windows have been removed and now contain modern UPVC although the hoodmoulds remain. The whole building has been re-rendered in what appears to be modern render which has covered previous quoining.



Figure 4.2: Side and Rear Elevation to Wildhouse Farm (2023)

- 4.10 The principal (south) elevation retains more of its original character when compared with other parts of the building. The west elevation has been entirely rebuilt and the east elevation is plain and contains no windows or openings. The rear (north) elevation has been extended and altered.

¹³

Fishwick, Henry (1889) The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster



Contribution made by Setting

- 4.11 The setting of Wildhouse Farm is relatively well defined by the buildings to the north (Bellavista Restaurant) and to the south (Wildhouse Court) which historically formed part of the wider farmstead before their conversion and alteration in the 20th century. The extent of changes to these buildings has greatly impacted the original setting of the listed building which has created a more domestic and commercial character and enclave of buildings rather than its original rural context.



Figure 4.3: View to Wildhouse Farm (2023)

- 4.12 The position of Wildhouse Farm adjoining the original route of Wildhouse Lane (Figure 4.3) illustrates its prominent position on the road between Milnrow to Littleborough, contributing towards the setting and thereby significance of the listed building,



- 4.13 The listed building is primarily and directly experienced from the original Wildhouse Lane where its age, architectural detailing and phasing remains appreciable (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). In glimpsed views at intermittent points along the road, the wider original rural context of the listed building can be experienced.



Figure 4.4: Garden to Wildhouse Farm (2023)

- 4.14 From the public footpath to the west, there are glimpsed and filtered views towards Wildhouse Farm across its private garden (Figure 4.4). This is however of the later 20th century elevation and does not allow for an understanding of the significance of the listed building.



Figure 4.5: View to Wildhouse Farm (2023)

- 4.15 In views from the north, Wildhouse Farm is largely screened by the Bellavista Restaurant and where any views are gained, it is read as part of an existing streetscape of altered buildings (Figure 4.5). These do not allow for an understanding or appreciation of the listed building or its original rural and farmstead setting. They make no meaningful contribution towards the significance of the listed building.



- 4.16 Similar views gained from the south towards Wildhouse Farm (Figure 4.6) are largely screened by Wildhouse Court and the mature planting within the gardens. As with from the north, these views do not allow for an understanding or appreciation of the significance of the listed building.



Figure 4.6: View to Wildhouse Farm (2023)

- 4.17 There are no other areas in which to experience the Wildhouse Farm due to the location of the listed building, the extent of neighbouring development, the topography of the land and the extent of mature planting. The overall contribution made by setting to the significance of Wildhouse Farm is considered to be low.

Bellavista Restaurant (Non-Designated Heritage Asset)



Figure 4.7: Bellavista Restaurant (2023)

Local Significance

- 4.18 As with Wildhouse Court, the Bellavista Restaurant (Figures 4.7 and 4.8) also appears to have been built in 19th century and was constructed as a barn to the north. It is understood to have formed part of the wider Wildhouse Farm complex.
- 4.19 The building is two storeys and retains the stonework to its former cart shed entrance (infilled with modern windows). A number of new window openings have been inserted across the main elevation, at ground and first floors, to Wildhouse Lane. Modern extensions have been added to the south, north and west of the building.
- 4.20 The significance of Bellavista Restaurant is low and confined to its former use as a barn to Wildhouse Farm.



Figure 4.8: Bellavista Restaurant (2023)

Contribution made by Setting

- 4.21 The setting of Bellavista Restaurant is largely defined by Wildhouse Farm to the north which formed part of the original farmstead complex. The buildings have however been altered and now read as a collection of modern domestic buildings. Its setting makes a limited contribution towards the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

Wildhouse Court (Non-Designated Heritage Asset)



Figure 4.9: Wildhouse Court (2023)

Local Significance

- 4.22 Wildhouse Court (Figures 4.9 and 4.10) appears to date from the early 19th century and was originally constructed as a barn and attached house. It is understood to have formed part of the wider Wildhouse Farm complex. The building is two storeys and retains the stonework to its former cart shed entrance (infilled with modern mullion windows). The building has been rendered and extended to the sides,
- 4.23 The whole building, including the window and door openings, are all modern replacements or insertions. The original appearance (as illustrated at Figure 3.5) has been largely eroded by the successive changes. The significance of Wildhouse Court is low and confined to its former use as a barn to Wildhouse Farm.



Figure 4.10: Wildhouse Court (2023)

Contribution made by Setting

- 4.24 The setting of Wildhouse Court is largely defined by Wildhouse Farm to the north which formed part of the original farmstead complex. The buildings have however been altered and now read as a collection of modern domestic buildings. Its setting makes a limited contribution towards the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.



Contribution made by the Application Site to the Significance of the Listed Building

- 4.25 As set out in further detail at Section 3, the Application Site (Figures 4.11 and 4.12) originally consisted of grassed open land from the 18th century onwards. It slopes downwards from the east to the west. There are no defined boundaries to the road or the nearby footpath.



Figure 4.11: View of the Application Site (2023)

- 4.26 Archival research and historic map regression indicates that the Application Site likely held an historic, functional, and visual connection with Wildhouse Farm. This is due to the proximity of the land to the farm buildings to the south of the listed building. These former connections have, however, been heavily eroded by the subdivision of the farmstead and by the inappropriate alterations and extensions to the listed building and non-designated heritage assets which have diminished their significance.



- 4.27 There is a limited visual relationship between the Application Site and the listed building due to the topography of the land, intervening development, and mature planting. Only the upper storey of the modern rebuilt section of the listed building is experienced from the site. This does not allow for any appreciation or understanding of the significance of Wildhouse Farm or the nearby non-designated heritage assets.



Figure 4.12: View of the Application Site (2023)

- 4.28 The Application Site in its current form no longer makes any meaningful contribution towards the significance of Wildhouse Farm or the non-designated Wildhouse Court and Bellavista Restaurant. With reference to Paragraph 212 of the NPPF, although the site is part of the setting and physical surroundings of the heritage assets, it is not an aspect that contributes to their significance.

5. Impact Assessment

Summary of Legislation and National Planning Policy

- 5.1 Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Rochdale Borough Council, in determining the full planning application, has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special interest they may possess (s.66). The meaning of 'preservation' in this context, as informed by case law, is taken to be the avoidance of harm.
- 5.2 Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.3 Paragraph 205 requires when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. 'Conservation' is defined by the NPPF as *'the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.'*
- 5.4 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.

- 5.5 Paragraph 212 requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to better reveal their significance. With respect to setting, the NPPF notes that proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.
- 5.6 Further details of the heritage legislation, national and local planning policy and guidance for consideration of the Proposed Development is set out in in **Appendix I**.

The Proposed Development

- 5.7 The Proposed Development consists of a full planning application for the construction of a residential dwelling with access gained off Wildhouse Lane with associated highways and landscaping.
- 5.8 Further information on the design and appearance of the Proposed Development is set out within the Design and Access Statement prepared by CJ Partnership Environmental Architects.

Impact Assessment

- 5.9 This impact assessment employs national advice provided by Historic England as an appropriate framework for analysis, including Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015), which sets out the importance of good design and response to local distinctiveness for new development in the historic environment. This advice provides a checklist of factors that may influence what will make the scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and proposed use of new development successful in its context.



Wildhouse Farm (Grade II Listed)

- 5.10 As set out earlier, the special interest of **Wildhouse Farm** is enshrined in its special architectural and historic interest as an early to mid 17th century former mansion house with historic connections with the Wild family. It has however been latterly altered, rebuilt, and subdivided. Its setting is relatively well defined by the neighbouring buildings to the north and south. It is reads as part of an enclave of buildings to Wildhouse Lane, all of which have been heavily altered.
- 5.11 Archival research and historic map regression indicates that the Application Site likely held an historic, functional, and visual connection with Wildhouse Farm. As set out, these former connections have been heavily eroded by the subdivision of the farmstead and by the inappropriate alterations and extensions to the listed building and non-designated heritage assets which have diminished their significance.
- 5.12 The Application Site in its current form no longer makes any meaningful contribution towards the significance of Wildhouse Farm. The construction of a new building on the site would therefore not affect the significance of the listed building, in principle.
- 5.13 The Proposed Development involves the construction of one residential dwelling on open land to the south of the listed building, which is separated by Wildhouse Court. The proposed dwelling is set back from the original route of Wildhouse Lane, with the built form located towards the centre of the Application Site. It has been designed to address the topography of the land, with views out towards the north west.
- 5.14 A modern yet contextual design is proposed for the new dwelling, but which reflects traditional characteristics found in the immediate vicinity including pitched gables and offshoot elements. It employs local materials

that resonate with the nearby listed building and Wildhouse Lane including the use of Pennine stone and render.

- 5.15 The Proposed Development also includes large areas of landscaping to the sides, front and rear of the new dwelling. This includes maintaining existing planting and strengthening this across the site. This will improve the wider verdant character of the Application Site.
- 5.16 The positioning and layout of the Proposed Development ensures that the building is not visible in any key views of the listed building along Wildhouse Lane. The architectural interest of the listed building would continue to be appreciated in these views. It would not affect those aspects of setting which contribute towards the significance of Wildhouse Farm.
- 5.17 In summary, the overall size, scale, layout, and design of the Proposed Development is considered to sustain the significance of Wildhouse Farm and maintains those aspects of setting which contribute towards its significance.

Bellavista Restaurant (Grade II Listed)

- 5.18 To the north west of the Application Site, beyond Wildhouse Farm, is the non-designated **Bellavista Restaurant**. As set out, the building holds low significance due to the extent of alteration and changes undertaken in the 20th century. Similarly, setting makes a limited contribution.
- 5.19 Due to the orientation of view, topography of land, and intervening development, the Proposed Development would not be visible in views of the non-designated heritage asset. The construction of a new dwelling on the Application Site would not affect the low significance of the non-designated Bellavista Restaurant.



Wildhouse Court (Grade II Listed)

- 5.20 The non-designated **Wildhouse Court** is located to the immediate north of the Application Site. As with Bellavista Restaurant, the building holds low significance due to the extent of alteration and changes undertaken in the 20th century. Similarly, setting makes a limited contribution.
- 5.21 In views of the non-designated heritage asset from the entrance off Wildhouse Lane, the built form of the Proposed Development would be largely screened from view due to its setback position and the sloping topography. The proposed landscaping would read as part of the existing backdrop of vegetation and trees in these views. The proposals would also not be experienced in more direct views.
- 5.22 From the south, the Proposed Development would be experienced alongside Wildhouse Court but its previous use, function and low significance as a former barn to the wider farmstead is not appreciable in these views. It appears as a modern domestic dwelling. The setback position of the new building would ensure that any views of the non-designated heritage asset are uninterrupted.
- 5.23 The Proposed Development would not affect the low significance of the non-designated Wildhouse Court.

Statutory Duty and National Planning Policy

- 5.24 Based on the above, supported by on-site visual survey and an assessment of the significance and setting of the nearby listed building, the Proposed Development would sustain the significance of the Wildhouse Farm (Grade II Listed). The requirement of s66 of the 1990 Act could be satisfied if Rochdale Council grants planning permission for the Proposed Development.

- 5.25 Similarly, the Proposed Development would not affect the low significance of the non-designated Bellavista Restaurant and Wildhouse Court through development within their setting.
- 5.26 With respect to the core planning principle of the NPPF in relation to the historic environment, the Proposed Development can sustain, and thereby conserve, the significance of the listed building and non-designated heritage assets. Accordingly, the Proposed Development could meet the objectives of paragraphs 203, 205, 209 and 212 of the NPPF.

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

- 5.27 This Heritage Statement provides a proportionate assessment of the significance of the identified heritage assets. As set out above, the Proposed Development is considered to sustain the significance of Wildhouse Farm (Grade II Listed) and both Wildhouse Court and Bellavista Restaurant (non-designated heritage assets).
- 5.28 On this basis, the proposals are therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Rochdale Borough Council Core Strategy (2016) and the saved policies in the Unitary Development Plan (2006).



6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Adapt Heritage on behalf of Mike and Christine Morris (the 'Applicants') in connection with a full planning application for the construction of one residential dwelling with associated access and landscaping (the 'Proposed Development') at Land at Wildhouse Court, Wildhouse Lane, Milnrow (the 'Application Site').
- 6.2 The Application Site is located adjacent to the Grade II Listed Wildhouse Farm and is proximate to two non-designated heritage assets.
- 6.3 Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Rochdale Borough Council (the 'Council'), in determining the full planning application, has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special interest they may possess (s.66). The meaning of 'preservation' in this context, as informed by case law, is taken to be the avoidance of harm.
- 6.4 Archival research and historic map regression indicates that the Application Site likely held an historic, functional, and visual connection with Wildhouse Farm. As set out, these former connections have been heavily eroded by the subdivision of the farmstead and by the inappropriate alterations and extensions to the listed building and non-designated heritage assets which have diminished their significance.
- 6.5 The Application Site in its current form no longer makes any meaningful contribution towards the significance of Wildhouse Farm. The construction of a new building on the site would therefore not affect the significance of the listed building, in principle.
- 6.6 Based upon on-site visual survey and an assessment of the significance and setting of the nearby listed building, the Proposed Development would sustain the significance of the Wildhouse Farm (Grade II Listed). The requirement of s66 of the 1990 Act could be satisfied if Rochdale Council grants planning permission for the Proposed Development.
- 6.7 Similarly, the Proposed Development would not affect the low significance of the non-designated Bellavista Restaurant and Wildhouse Court through development within their setting.
- 6.8 With respect to the core planning principle of the NPPF in relation to the historic environment, the Proposed Development can sustain, and thereby conserve, the significance of the listed building and non-designated heritage assets. Accordingly, the Proposed Development could meet the objectives of paragraphs 203, 205, 209 and 212 of the NPPF.



Appendix I: Heritage Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance



Heritage Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Below is an overview of the relevant heritage legislation, national and local planning policy and supplementary planning documents and guidance.

Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Rochdale Borough Council, in determining the full planning application, has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special interest they may possess (s.66).

The meaning of 'preservation', as informed by case law, is taken to be the avoidance of harm.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) requires that great weight is given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and this reflects the statutory duty of the 1990 Act with respect to listed buildings and conservation areas.

Conservation is defined by the NPPF as *"the process of maintaining and managing change to heritage assets in ways that sustain and where appropriate, enhance their significance."*¹⁴

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF elaborates that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as

the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 205 requires when considering the impact of a Proposed Development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss requires clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 207 states that where a Proposed Development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm and or loss is necessary to achieve substantial benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- *"the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use"*

Paragraph 208 requires that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

¹⁴

DLUHC (2023) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary



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.

Paragraph 212 requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to better reveal their significance. With respect to setting, the NPPF notes that proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Local Planning Policy

Rochdale Borough Council Local Plan: Core Strategy (2016)

The Core Strategy for Rochdale borough was adopted on 19 October 2016. It's the lead document in the Council's Local Plan.

In relation to protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage, Policy P2 of the Core Strategy states that:

"1. We will protect and enhance the borough's character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the qualities of its landscapes, utilising the considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. We will do this by:

Requiring new development to integrate successfully with the key natural features of the borough, e.g. river valleys and the Pennine landscape;

Requiring new development to take opportunities to protect and open up important views of hills and valleys which are part of the borough's unique character;

Restoring the River Roch and other water bodies to their place as key and attractive features of the borough, including opening up waterways where they have been covered, and enhancing their setting, heritage assets and biodiversity potential;

*Protecting, enhancing and utilising outstanding cultural landscapes, such as the Cheesden Valley area and around Littleborough and Hollingworth Lake; and
Conserving and enhancing townscape character.*

2. We will protect the borough's heritage by:

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.*

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;

Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and



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

Rochdale Borough Council Local Plan: Unitary Development Plan (2006)

The Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan was adopted in June 2006 and forms the policy period between 1999 and 2016.

In relation to the design criteria for new development, Policy BE/2 states that:

"Development proposals will be required to demonstrate good design by:

- a) Ensuring that they are compatible with or improve their surroundings by virtue of their scale, density, height, massing, layout, materials, architectural style and detail and means of enclosure;*
- b) Creating visual interest in areas or buildings lacking character;*
- c) Taking opportunities to retain, enhance or create views, landmarks and other townscape features which make a material contribution to the character of the area and reveal such features to public view;*
- d) Retaining and enhancing the architectural or historic qualities and features of buildings of character;*
- e) Appropriate treatment of open spaces between and around buildings, including the provision of landscaping as an integral part of the development layout;*
- f) Retaining key natural features, including trees, as part of the landscaping of the site;*
- g) Providing for safe and convenient access and circulation;*

h) Minimising opportunities for crime against people or property;

i) Making adequate provision for natural light within and between buildings;

j) Minimising the potential environmental impact of and on the development, including noise, air and water pollution."

Policy G/BE/9 sets out the policy for the conservation of built heritage. It states the following:

"Priority will be given to the practical conservation and enhancement of those features of the built environment which are the most valuable, in particular: conservation areas; listed buildings and their settings; scheduled ancient monuments; parks and gardens of special historic interest; and archaeological remains. such buildings, areas and features of architectural and historic merit will be protected from adverse development or demolition and positive measures will be taken or supported, wherever possible, to facilitate their continued upkeep and beneficial use. particular emphasis will be placed on securing new uses for existing buildings to ensure their future, and on promoting conservation activities which provide a stimulus for the regeneration of town centres, older urban and rural areas, including historic and cultural landscapes."

In relation to the protection of locally important buildings and features of architectural and historic interest, Policy BE/11 states that: *"The Council will permit development proposals that do not adversely affect buildings and features which are of local interest and which contribute to the character of an area and/or are important in townscape terms."*

For development affecting the setting of a listed building, Policy BE/15 of the UDP requires that: *"Development will not be permitted, where through its siting, scale, design or materials, would harm the setting of a listed building."*



Guidance

National Planning Policy Guidance, 2019

Whilst not planning policy the Planning Practice Guidance provides a clear indication of the Government's approach to the application of national policy contained in the NPPF. Where there is conflict between the guidance in the PPG and earlier documents the PPG will take precedence.

Historic England Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)

This note is not a statement of Government policy but supports the implementation of national government policy. It provides advice on assessing the significance of heritage assets and the impact of proposals on that significance.

Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017)

Historic England has revised its guidance relating to setting and views of heritage assets. The guidance advocates a staged approach to assessment involving identification of the affected assets and setting, an assessment of the degree to which setting and views contribute to the significance of the assets, an assessment of the effects of the proposed development, exploration of ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm and the monitoring of outcomes.

The revised guidance clarifies that there is a distinction between views that contribute to heritage significance and views that might be valued for reasons of landscape character or visual amenity. It states that the extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places.

The guidance makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, rather its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the

relevant heritage asset itself. The guidance sets out the need for a systematic and staged approach to assessing the impact of development proposals in the setting of a heritage asset. It confirms that such assessment should be based on an understanding of the significance of the heritage assets affected and then the contribution of setting to that significance.

Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019)

The guidance covers the NPPF requirement for applicants for heritage and other consents to describe heritage significance to help local planning authorities to make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets. Understanding the significance of heritage assets, in advance of developing proposals for their buildings and sites, enables owners and applicants to receive effective, consistent and timely decisions. The advice note explores the assessment of significance of heritage assets as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal(s).





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