

Heritage Statement

The Edgar Wood, 34 Middleton Gardens,
Middleton, Rochdale, M24 4DF



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage statement has been prepared on behalf of our client, The Stonegate Group, following receipt of an invalidation notice on 21st June 2023 in respect of proposals for external alterations/refurbishment of the public house (The Edgar Wood) at 34 Middleton Gardens, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 4DF. This statement forms a proportionate heritage statement in compliance with paragraph 194 of the NPPF.
- 1.2. The statement will include the following:
- The site and its surroundings
 - Relevant legislation, policy and guidance framework.
 - Heritage significance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area.
 - Details of the proposals
 - Impact of the proposals on heritage
 - Conclusion
- 1.3. Overall, this statement provides an assessment of the proposals in relation to the relevant national and local planning policies and demonstrates that proposed external alterations/refurbishment will not harm the conservation area as it is designed sensitively.
- 1.4. For the above reasons, none of the works proposed would result in 'harm' to the character of the Conservation Area. As such, paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF do not need to be engaged. The works also fully comply with local policy and guidance, as referenced above. Therefore, the proposals are acceptable in planning and heritage terms.

2. Site Background and Planning Context

2.1. The Edgar Wood, 34 Middleton Gardens, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 4DF is a public house situated within Middleton Town Centre.

Figure 2.1 - Application Site - The Edgar Wood, 34 Middleton Gardens, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 4DF (Existing)



Source: The Stonegate Group

2.2. The following applications relevant to the application site are as follows:

- Planning app ref: 23/00535/ADV – Applications for various externally illuminated wall mounted fascia signs and 1 no. projecting sign. Pending Consideration.
- Planning app ref: 07/D49192 – Formation of external drinking area to front of premises enclosed by 1.1m high railings and including the installation of 2 awnings to the front elevation. Approved 02/08/2007.

2.3. The site is located within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. Importantly the site is not locally, nor nationally listed.

3. Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Heritage Legislation

- 3.1. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the primary legislation and foundation on which further policy, and guidance relating to the conservation of the historic environment is built. Section 66 of the Act relates to the ‘general duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions’, with Section 66 (1) stating that when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a development, special regard must be given by the local authority to the “desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses” (Planning Act 1990, Section 66).
- 3.2. Section 66 (2) of the Act states that “a local authority shall have regard to the desirability of preserving features of special architectural or historic interest, and in particular, listed buildings”.
- 3.3. Section 72 of the Act relates to the ‘general duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions’, with Section 72 (1) of the Act stating that in exercising planning functions, “special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

National Planning Policy (NPPF) (2021)

- 3.4. The National Planning Policy Framework, with which all Local Development Plans must comply, constitutes the national level of planning policy and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF was originally introduced in March 2012 and was subsequently updated and published on 24 July 2018. The 2018 update broadly retains the wording of the 2012 Chapter on Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (Chapter 16). The NPPF was recently updated again (February 2019) in order to provide definitions for housing need. No paragraph numbers changed as a result of this update.
- 3.5. The most recent update was published on 20 July 2021. This update did not cause any changes to national policy which would affect this proposal, some paragraph numbers have been updated accordingly.
- 3.6. The NPPF represents a continuation of the philosophy contained within Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5), introduced in 2010 and one of a number of planning policy documents replaced by the NPPF in 2012.
- 3.7. The NPPF uses slightly different terminology to the Act and emphasises that authorities should take account of “the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation” (Paragraph 190).
- 3.8. ‘Conservation’ is defined within 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” (p.66).
- 3.9. No definition of ‘preservation’ (or any variant) is contained within the document. However, Historic England advise that both ‘conservation’ and ‘preservation’ are concerned with the management of change which seeks to sustain the special interest or significance of heritage assets. ‘Conservation’ has the addition of taking opportunities to enhance significance where it is possible and considered to be appropriate. This is discussed in Historic England’s 2018 publication *Decisions: Legal Requirements for Listed Building and Other Consents*.
- 3.10. The NPPF also helps to define other key terms within heritage policy. These are provided within the table below.

Term	Definition
Heritage Assets	“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. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).” (p.67)
Designated Heritage Assets	“A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.” (p.66)
Significance	“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.” (p.71)
Setting of a Heritage Asset	“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.” (p.71)
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- 3.11. Chapter 16 specifically relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paras. 189-208).
- 3.12. Paragraph 194 stipulates that within applications, applicants are required to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution made by their setting. Local authorities should also identify and assess the significance of the heritage assets affected by a proposal. This should be taken into account when assessing the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset (Paragraph 195). Paragraph 197 of the NPPF goes on to state that 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. (p.56)
- 3.13. Paragraphs 199-208 of the document discuss how potential impacts to heritage assets should be considered with paragraph 199 stipulating a requirement for great weight to be given to an asset's conservation when considering the impact of a proposed development on its significance. The weight given should reflect the importance of the asset (p.57).

Degrees of Harm

- 3.14. Where harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset is identified, the NPPF requires clear and convincing justification of the proposals. The document categorises levels of harm as: total loss; substantial harm; and less than substantial harm.
- 3.15. Paragraph 201 states that where a development would lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of) the significance of a designated asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that such harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm, or all of the following apply:
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
 - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
- 3.16. Paragraph 202 states that where a proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 3.17. The NPPG offers guidance as to what public benefits may constitute and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 8). Public benefits may include heritage benefits, such as:
- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
 - reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
 - securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation

Rochdale Core Strategy (adopted October 2016)

- Policy SP3/M 'The Strategy for Middleton'

- Policy P2 'Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage'
- Policy P3 'Improving design of new development'.

Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (January 2008)

- 3.18. Rochdale Council's Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal describes the townscape character of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area, describing the history and key features of the area and what makes it significant.

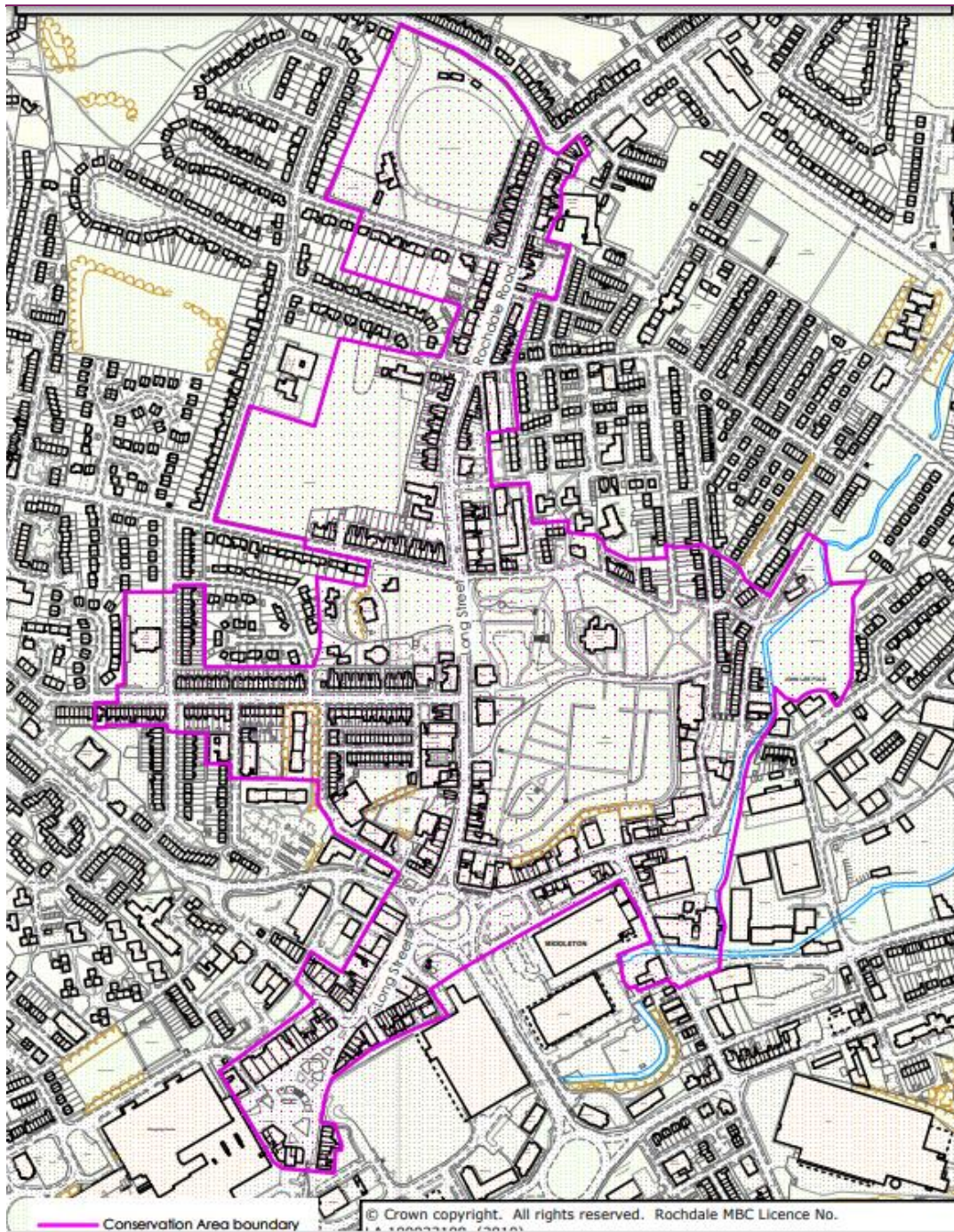
4. Heritage Significance

- 4.1. This section assesses the significance of the heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed works. This is considered to be the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area.

Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area

- 4.2. The Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area was first designated in 1978 and received 5 extensions in 2009. Extension 3 'Long Street to Middleton Gardens' resulted in the application site forming part of the conservation area.

Figure 4.1 - Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area (Designed 1978 – Extended 2009)



Source: Rochdale Borough Council

Character Appraisal

- 4.3. To the northern most tip of the conservation area is a cluster of listed Edgar Wood buildings. These include No's 33 and 35, Rochdale Road (Redcroft and Fencegate - see fig 25) built in 1895. Characteristic of the front fenestration include the asymmetry and horizontal windows echoing the Georgian weavers' houses.
- 4.4. At the bottom of Long Street, there is an eclectic but pleasing grouping of Victorian shop fronts (some may have Georgian origin). The mixed styles, traditional shop fronts and brick bonds of the grouping add to the variety and lively character of the area.
- 4.5. The use of building materials often relates to period and hierarchy. The earliest vernacular buildings are of timber while the most significant are of stone.
- 4.6. Throughout the conservation area there is a multiplicity of brick bonds ranging from stretcher bond through to header bond. The bricks used in the Georgian houses on Long Street and New Lane have a handmade quality, which gives them a softer appearance than the later machine-made bricks of Rochdale Road. In many Edgar Wood buildings, common brick was deliberately used to emulate handmade brick.
- 4.7. The area there is a good mix of styles, colours and bonds used for emphasis or delineation of hierarchy. Nevertheless, the predominant mix of materials and colours has a soft 'natural' characteristic. For example, the browns and greys of the stone and slate roofs establish the character over the occasional red or orange tiled roof.

Extension 3 – Long Street to Middleton Gardens

- 4.8. The area in which the application site is now situated has become the commercial heart of Middleton having once been the original location of the medieval mill pond and mill. Buildings vary in forms, materials and styles.
- 4.9. Area 3 has seen much modern development which has enabled it to become the commercial focus of the town. The area lies over much of the original land taken up by the medieval hall, gardens, mill pond and mill.
- 4.10. Today the buildings and plots occupying the land between Old Hall Street and Fountain Street take up the plan shape of the pond – the likelihood is that the backfilling of the pond released much needed development land in an area which was becoming increasingly crowded during the hiatus of the industrial revolution in Middleton.
- 4.11. The dominant space in area 3 is Middleton Gardens, which is surrounded by an eclectic mix of buildings which have varying forms, materials and style.
- 4.12. In area three there is notable use of reinforced concrete flat roof construction namely at 33 Middleton Gardens. Also, use of chevron patterns to the tiled frontages is featured.

5. Proposals

5.1. The proposed changes to The Edgar Wood solely relate to external alterations, which include

- New entrance lantern
- Existing hanging baskets to be refixed onto new timber faces pillars
- Extensive joinery repairs to ground floor level fascia woodwork which is rotting.
- Over clad with all columns matching detailing and decorate.
- Remove 2no. awnings
- Ground floor decorations
- New structural opening with concrete lintel and an outward opening single leaf fire exit door with 1050mm clearance from concrete landing with painted highlighted nosings. This will include; opening; new frame and escape door with ironmongery plus signage, external landing & barrier rail, external light.
- Rehang door outwards & fit push pad with turn handle for external access.

6. Heritage Assessment

6.1. The main consideration of this heritage assessment is:

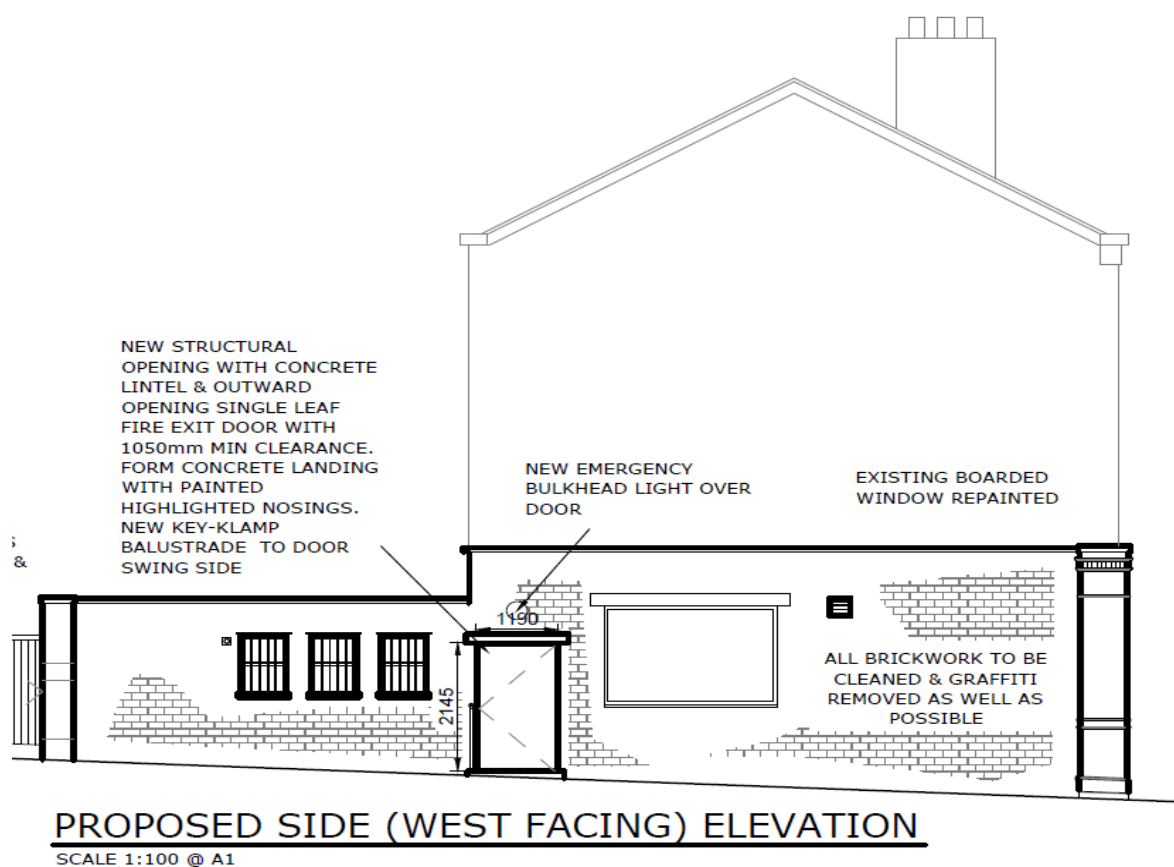
- The impact on the significance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area.

6.2. This assessment will evaluate the impact on the significance of the conservation area which only concerns the external features of the Edgar Wood. Therefore, the external alterations detailed in the ground floor plan and elevations will not impact the significance of the heritage asset (Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area).

6.3. The vast majority of external works involve general upkeeping of the venue, having a neutral impact upon the Conservation Area. For instance, proposals will prioritise risk from decay, giving special attention to the conservation area in this regard. Therefore, proposals are in full accordance with the consensus of the urban design SPD (September 2007) and adopted local policies, particularly P2 & P3.

6.4. The key external alteration as part of the proposals relates to a new fire escape route on the west facing elevation of the public house (see figure 6.1 below), of which, is positioned in a location where there used to be an old window opening. The purpose is to ensure safer manoeuvrability for customers in the instance of an emergency. The new structural opening to be formed, will consist of concrete lintel and an outward opening single leaf fire exit door. The scale of alteration has been meticulously considered, having due regard to the scale, density and massing of the existing venue and the conservation area. The new opening to allow for a new fire escape route will ensure the intended entrances/exits to the building is appropriately located and visible, whilst ensuring the intended function is still easily understood.

Figure 6.1 – New Fire Escape (West Elevation)



Source: Planning Potential Research

- 6.5. Based on the above, and the fact the site is not listed and there are no listed buildings in the immediate vicinity, proposals are in full compliance with Rochdale Borough Council's adopted development plan and the NPPF (2021).

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. This Heritage Statement provides an assessment of the works in relation to the relevant national and local planning policies. The heritage assessment demonstrates that the proposal would not harm the heritage significance of the conservation area.
- 7.2. This assessment concludes that:
- The formulation of a new fire escape will not harm the conservation area, particularly as it is sensitively designed.
 - The general up-keeping prevents risk of decay and upholds the venue's characteristics within the conservation area,
- 7.3. For the above reasons, none of the works proposed would result in 'harm' to the character of the Conservation Area. As such, paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF do not need to be engaged. The works also fully comply with local policy and guidance, as referenced above. Therefore, the proposals are acceptable in planning and heritage terms.