

Heritage Statement

Land at Station Road, Rochdale

December 2023

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Client

Rochdale Development Agency

Our reference

ROCH3013

December 2023

Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of Rochdale Development Agency in connection with an application for full planning permission for a residential led mixed-use development (the 'Proposed Development') at Land at Station Road, Rochdale (the 'Site'). The full description of development is as follows:

"Demolition of 33-41 Maclure Road and partial demolition at rear of 29-31 Maclure Road and Conversion of 29-31 Maclure Road and Erection of a 6-storey building to provide 38 apartments (Use Class C3) across combined upper floors with ground floor commercial use (Use Classes E(a), E(b), E(c) and Ee), associated infrastructure and ancillary works."

- 1.2 The Site is an irregularly shaped area of land occupied by two existing buildings. In the southern part of the site, occupying the corner of Maclure Road with Station Road, is a modern single storey flat roofed building containing a number of retail units. To the north is a two storey late Victorian brick building, with stone dressings, sub-divided into two commercial units (known locally as the 'Chicken Shaq').

- 1.3 The part of the Site which is occupied by the Chicken Shaq falls within the Maclure Road Conservation Area. The conservation area was designated in 2006 and is centred on a small stretch of townscape along Maclure Road which encompasses the grade II* Roman Catholic Church of St John and the locally listed former fire station (now the Greater Manchester Fire Service Museum).

- 1.4 In determining the submitted full planning application, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) has statutory duties under s66(1) and s72(1) to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the Church of St John and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Maclure Road Conservation Area. The setting of conservation areas is not protected by primary legislation; however the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does state that the setting of a designated heritage asset (including conservation areas) can contribute to their significance.

- 1.5 The NPPF provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, Paragraph 194 sets out that:

"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

- 1.6 Paragraph 195 then sets out that local planning authorities should also identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposals. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of

proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

- 1.7 To meet these requirements, **Section 2** of this Heritage Statement identifies the heritage assets within, and also in the vicinity of, the Site; the significance of which may be affected either directly and or indirectly by the proposed development as currently envisioned. **Section 3** provides a summary of the Site context and historic development before **Section 4** provides a baseline analysis of the significance of the identified and likely affected heritage assets; informed by that context and considered specifically in relation to the Site and the nature and extent of the Proposed Development. **Section 5** assesses the impact of the Proposed Development in light of the relevant legislation, national and local planning policy and guidance for the historic environment. **Section 6** summaries and concludes the findings of the Heritage Statement.
- 1.8 For completeness, **Appendix 1** includes the relevant boundary map for the Maclure Road Conservation Area, as provided by RMBC.
- 1.9 **Appendix 2** sets out in full the relevant legislation, and national and local planning policy and guidance for development that affects heritage assets, including the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy in the NPPF 2023 and supported by NPPG, and other local policy and guidance.
- 1.10 It is to be noted that heritage assets of archaeological interest fall outside the remit of this report.

Heritage Assets

- 2.1 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

Designated Heritage Assets

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

Listed Buildings

- 2.3 The **Roman Catholic Church of St John the Baptist** (grade II* listed) is situated c.100m to the north west of the Site. There are no other listed buildings close to the Site with potential for their significance to be affected by the Proposed Development.

Conservation Areas

- 2.4 The northern part of the Site (Chicken Shaq) is situated within the **Maclure Road Conservation Area**, which was designated in 2006. The remainder of the Site falls within the setting of the conservation area.
- 2.5 There is currently no adopted conservation area appraisal or management plan for the conservation area, though a draft conservation area appraisal was published in May 2023.³

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.6 Non-designated heritage assets are those identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). Historic England’s guidance on ‘Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment’ (2015) clarifies 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 an application.”*
- 2.7 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) recognises that a substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets. It also recognises that there are a number of processes through which non-designated heritage assets may be identified, including the local and neighbourhood plan-making processes and conservation area appraisals and reviews. Irrespective of how they are identified, the guidance emphasises that it is important

² MHCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (2023) – Annex 2: Glossary

³ RMBC et al (2023) Maclure Road Conservation Area Appraisal Edited Draft May 2023

that decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence.

2.8 Rochdale holds a list of non-designated heritage assets, published by township, along with the criteria for their identification. Those identified as having potential to be affected by the Proposed Development (as a result of change within their setting) are as follows:

- The **Fire Station** and **nos. 15-17, 19-21 and 23-25 Maclure Road** have been formally identified by RMBC as non-designated heritage assets. Their significance and setting are considered collectively as part of the assessment of the Maclure Road Conservation Area.
- **Deen House**, on Station Road, has also been identified by RMBC as a non-designated heritage asset. It sits outside the conservation area and is therefore considered separately.
- **Rochdale Station, Miall Street** – The original 19th century Railway Station building on Station Road was rebuilt in the 1970s. There is a secondary access from Miall Street. During pre-application engagement, it was confirmed by the conservation officer that the non-designated heritage asset relates to the presence of a Railway Station and rail infrastructure, originally established during the mid-19th century, rather than the existing building on Station Road. The significance of the asset will therefore not be affected by the Proposed Development and is not considered further within this report.

Site Context and Historic Development

Site Context

- 3.1 The Site is an irregularly shaped area of land occupied by two existing buildings. In the southern part of the Site, occupying the corner of Maclure Road with Station Road, is a modern single storey flat roofed building containing a number of retail units. To the north is a two storey late Victorian brick building, with stone dressings, sub-divided into two commercial units (known locally as the 'Chicken Shaq').

Figure 3.1: Aerial impact of the Site



- 3.2 The Site is situated immediately north of Rochdale Station and is within the Station Gateway masterplan and Supplementary Planning Document (SPD); forming part of the 'Fire Station Block.' Rochdale Station is separated from the town centre, being approximately 0.5 mile to the south. The station and surrounding area have been identified for regeneration and is anticipated to see forthcoming change as the SPD and masterplan are implemented. **Figure 3.2 and 3.3** overleaf are taken from the masterplan document and show RMBC's vision for the area.
- 3.3 To the north of the Site is the former Maclure Road Fire Station with its distinctive campanile tower, now the Greater Manchester Fire Service Museum. To the east of the Site on Station Road is a one to two storey former labour exchange building. The townscape has a more open character at this southern end of Maclure Road due to the road network and set back of buildings on the west of the street. The Rochdale Station Metrolink tram stop is in the centre of the street, in front of Chicken Shaq, with its associated infrastructure (shelter, railings, overhead lines and lighting etc) which dominates the streetscene. Opposite the Site and set back from Maclure Road is Nye Bevan House, a community health facility dating from the early 21st century and

formed of two connected four-storey blocks in white render. To the north of which is the grade II* listed red brick Roman Catholic Church of St John in a Byzantine style with its landmark dome. To the south west of the Site is the former Haji Cash and Carry building; a heavily altered two storey former industrial unit which is earmarked for redevelopment in the masterplan and SPD.

Figure 3.2: Birds-eye image looking north up Maclure Road, taken from the Station Gateway Masterplan



Figure 3.3: View looking north along Maclure Road, taken from the Station Gateway Masterplan



Historic Development

- 3.4 Rochdale is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) and has a long history as a medieval parish which grew into an industrial market town as a result of the woollen industry and its strategic location as a gateway to the western Pennines. From the late 18th century the glebe land to the south of the town was developed following a private act of parliament. The most significant change was the establishment of the Rochdale Branch Canal (part of the Rochdale Canal) basin and wharf at Richard Street. The basin was opened in 1798 and by the mid-19th century the basin itself and the surrounding area was well developed (see **Figure 3.4**).

Figure 3.4: Extract of the 1844 tithe map for Castleton (Touchstones Rochdale, Rochdale Arts & Heritage service T2). The approximate location of the Site is in red.

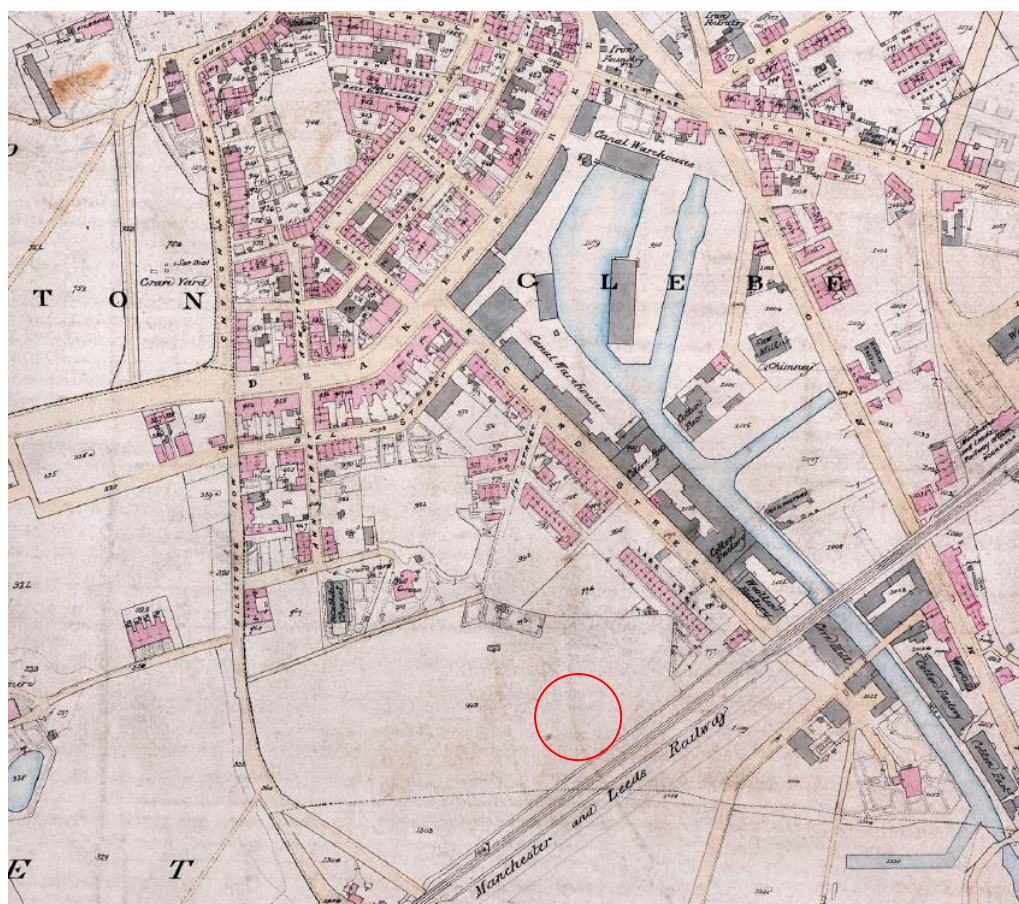
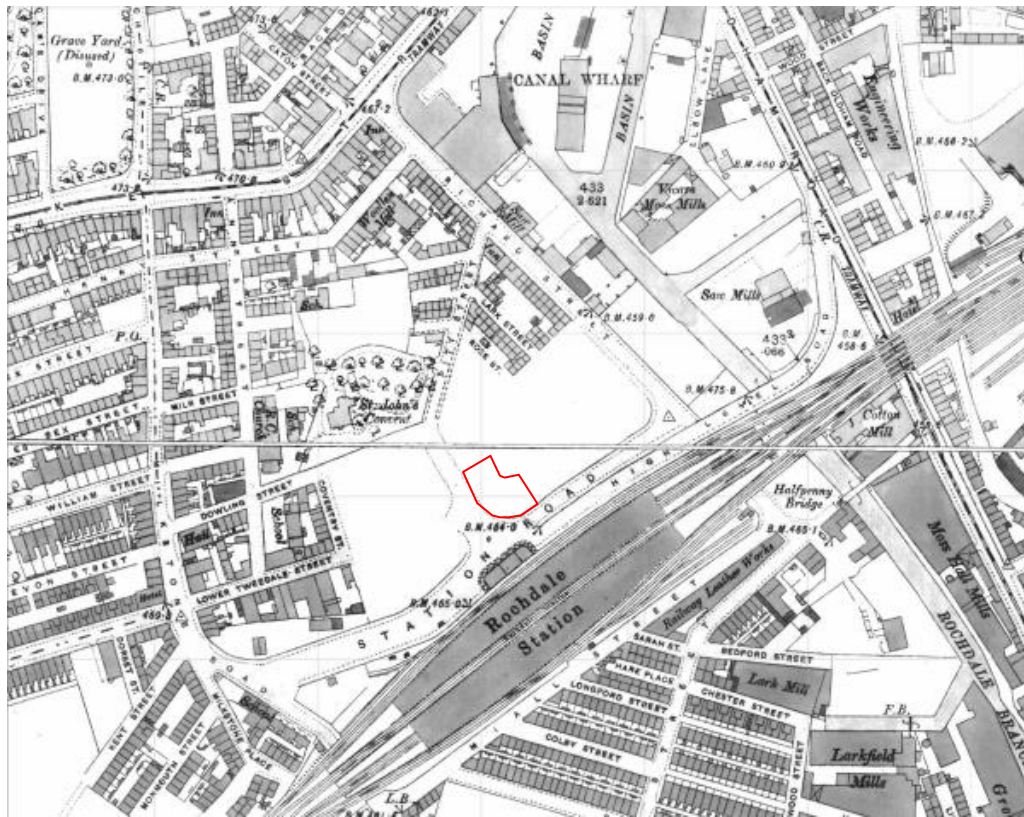
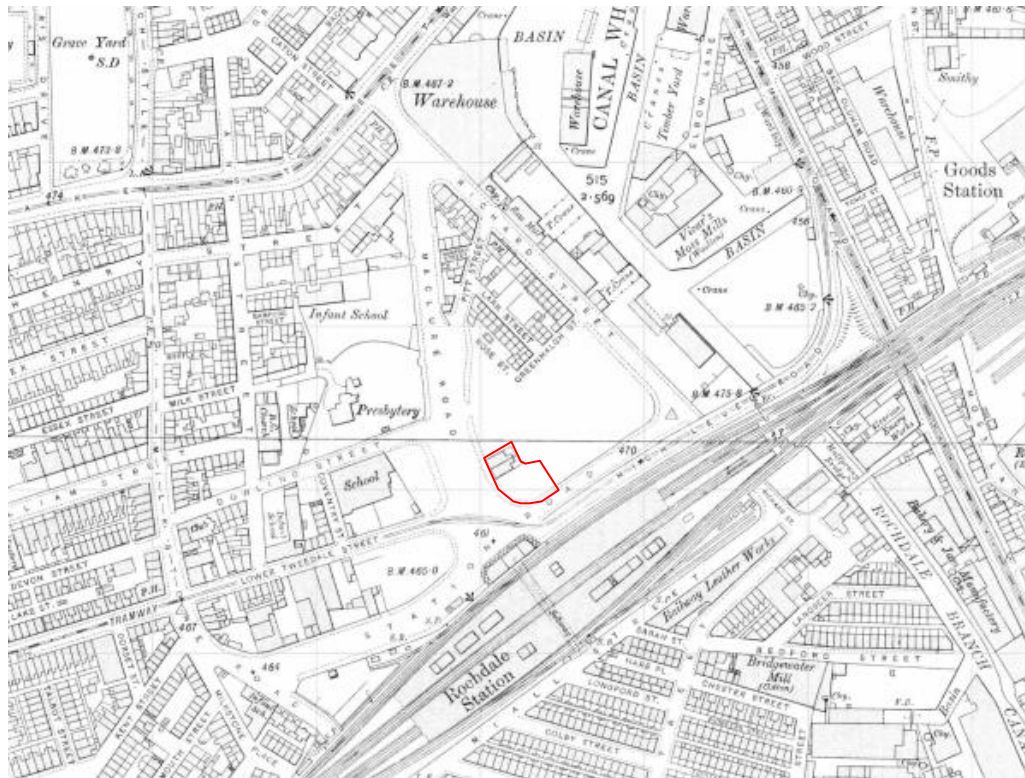


Figure 3.5: 1891 Ordnance Survey Map. The location of the Site is outlined in red.



- 3.5 On 28 April 1889, a new railway station for passengers opened on the Manchester and Leeds Line, replacing the earlier station on Oldham Street. Station Road was formed, linking the station to the town centre via Richard Street. Maclure Road was laid out shortly afterwards, providing a more direct connection to Drake Street and the town centre. Historic maps and aerial photography (included at **Figures 3.4 to 3.7**), show the developing street pattern, including the creation of Maclure Road, between 1891 and 1910. The existing Chicken Shaq building was also added within the same period and is first identified on the 1910 OS Map at **Figure 3.6**. A review of Trade Directories from the period indicate that Chicken Shaq may have been called 'Station Buildings' and was occupied by a variety of commercial uses including offices in the early 20th century. Development of the area north of the station was slow-paced, and the building stood isolated for a number of decades.

Figure 3.6: 1910 Ordnance Survey Map. The location of the Site is outlined in red.



- 3.6 A key period of change for the area came in the 1920s and 1930s. The Roman Catholic Church of St John the Baptist was built in the 1920s, adjacent to the site of St John's convent (later a presbytery and now demolished). During the 1930s, an Employment Exchange (Deen House) was built to the east of the Site, lining Station Road, and a fire station was added, with associated housing, to the north, on Maclure Road.

Figure 3.7: Historic England Photograph: EPW016784 flown 01/08/1926.
The location of the Site is outlined in red.



Figure 3.8: 1930 Ordnance Survey Map. The location of the Site is outlined in red.

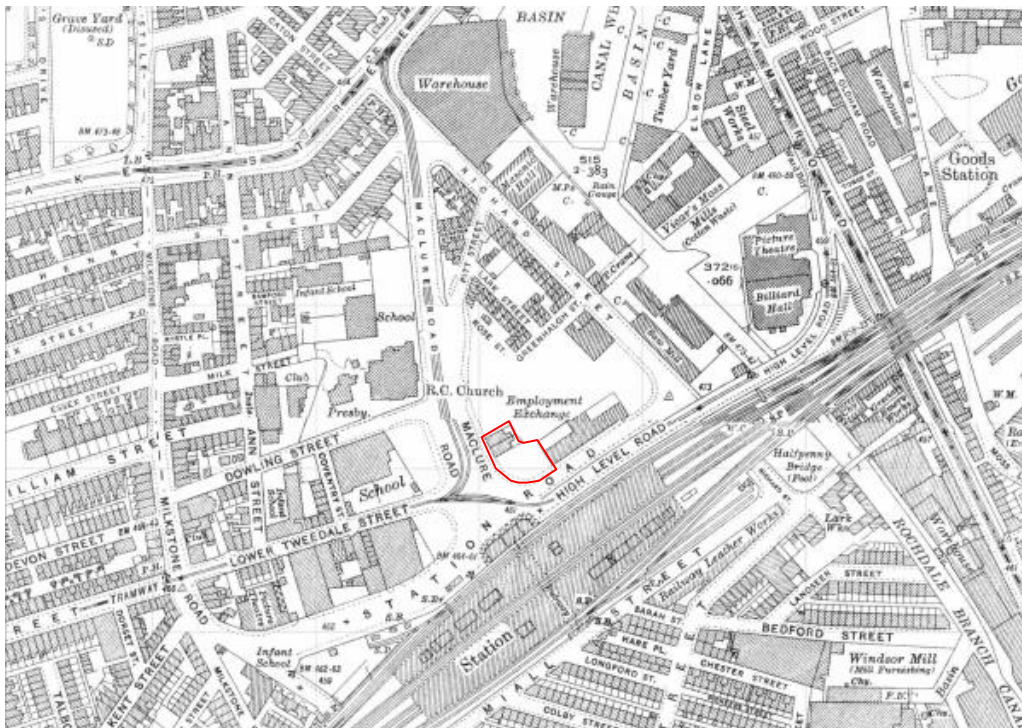


Figure 3.9: 1953 Aerial Photograph⁴. The location of the Site is outlined in red.

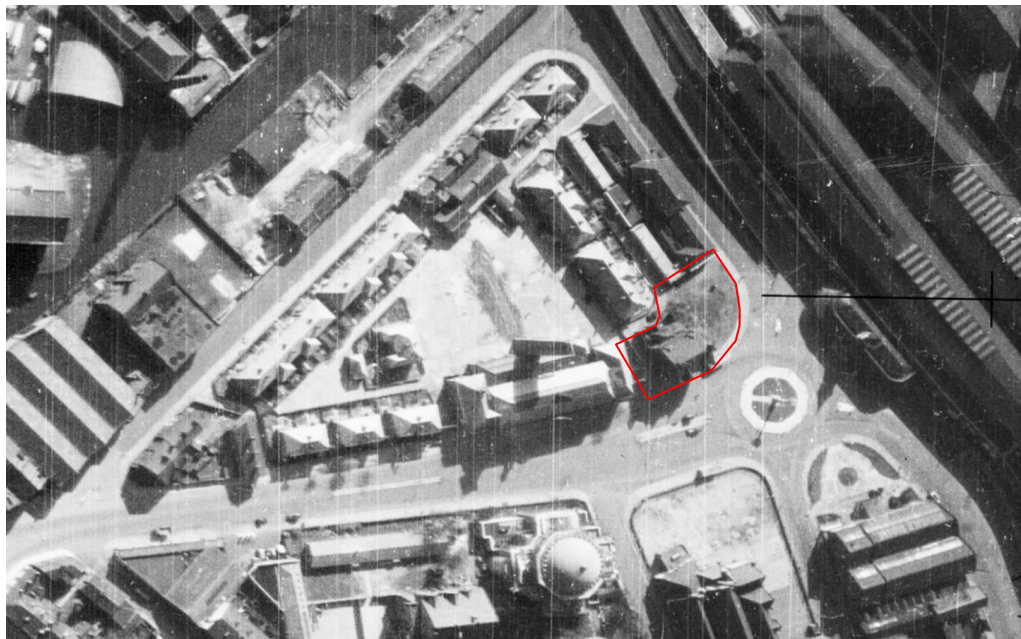
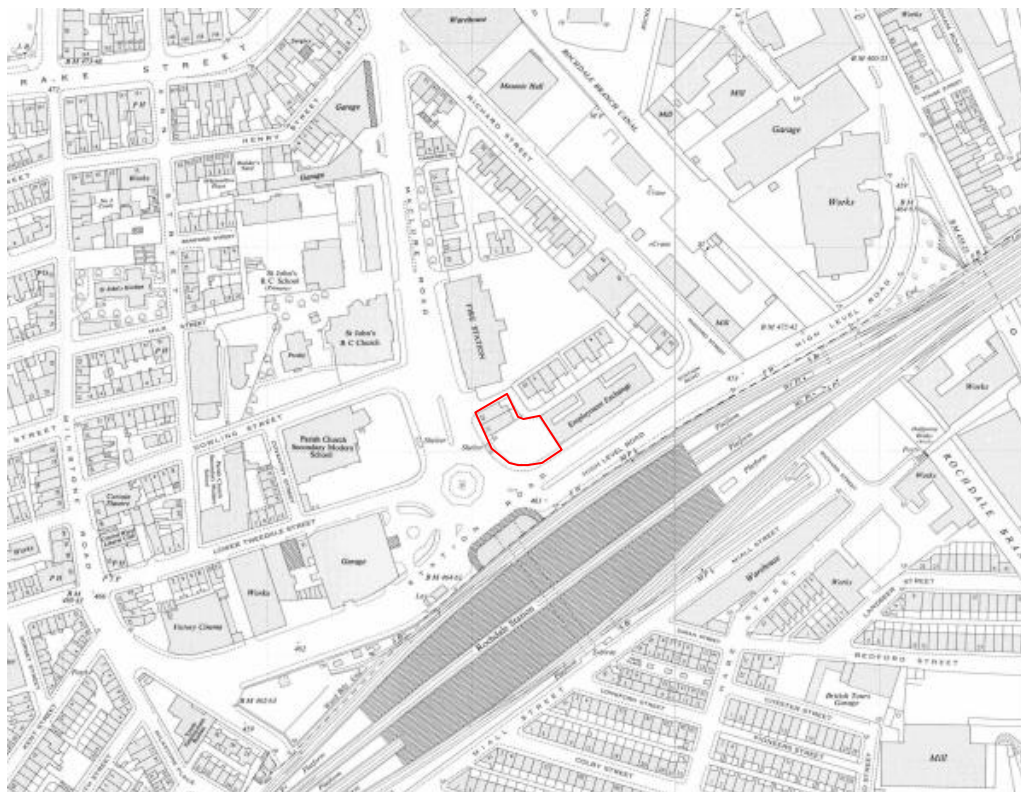


Figure 3.10: 1957 Ordnance Survey Map. The location of the Site is outlined in red.



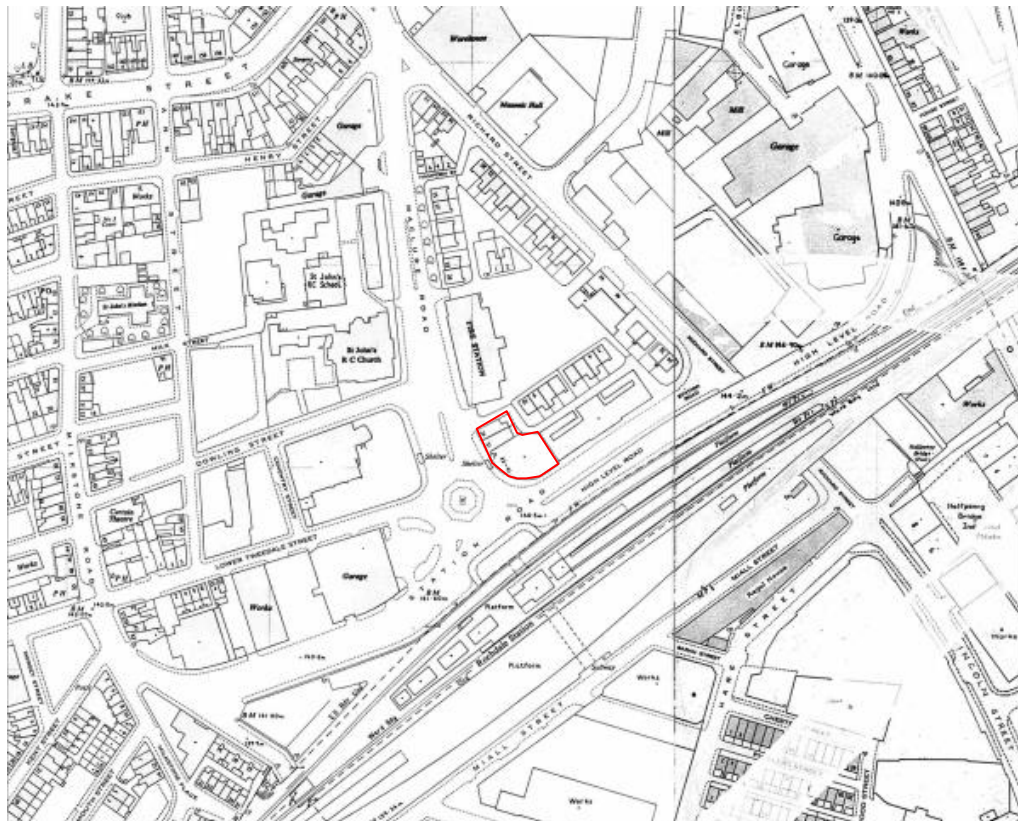
⁴ Historic England Architect - raf_82_775_vp2_0246 flown 02/05/1953

- 3.7 By the 1950s residential development to the north of the employment exchange and rear of the Site was present. The tramways along Station Road and Maclure Road had also been removed and, as shown in **Figures 3.9 and 3.11**, the new road layout featured a roundabout and an area of public realm in front of the station. The existing modern retail unit was added to the Site between c.1957 and 1964 (**Figures 3.9 to 3.11**). In 1979 a new booking office and frontage replaced the late 19th century entrance to the train station.
- 3.8 In the early 21st century Nye Bevan House was erected on land to the south of the Church of St John, previously occupied by a school. In 2013, the Metrolink was extended to Rochdale, with a stop added on Maclure Road, outside the train station.
- 3.9 Today, the Site is comprised of the c.1900 Chicken Shaq building, with altered ground floor and uPVC windows and the late 1950s/1960s single storey retail development. The surroundings are varied with the 1920s/1930s civic townscape of the Maclure Road Conservation Area to the north, the Metrolink, road and railway infrastructure to the south and west and Haji's Cash and Carry and Nye Bevan House beyond.

Figure 3.11: 1964 Aerial Photograph of Maclure Road (courtesy of Rochdale Local Studies). The location of the Site is outlined in red.



Figure 3.12: 1982-85 Ordnance Survey Map. The location of the Site is outlined in red.



Summary

- 3.10 In summary, growth to the south of Rochdale was precipitated by the development of glebe land from the late 18th century, most notably the construction of the canal basin at Richard Street. However, the Site and its immediate surroundings developed later, following the location of Rochdale train station in 1889, after which Maclure Road was laid out as a more direct connection to Drake Street and the town centre. Even then, the area's development was relatively slow-paced; whilst the 'Chicken Shaq' building in the north of the Site was built c.1900, it stood isolated until the 1920s and 1930s when the Church of St John the Baptist, the fire station and associated housing and an employment exchange were erected. The corner plot opposite the station entrance within the south of the Site remained vacant and was only developed in the late 1950s/early 1960s.
- 3.11 The junction of Station Road and Maclure Road has changed a number of times since it was laid out c.1900 and today provides a relatively open character due to the width of the junction and set back of buildings along the west of Maclure Road at its southern end. The historic tram network was removed, and replaced with a roundabout and public realm, to later be reinstated as part of the Metrolink in 2013. Today, the area is characterised by buildings of differing styles and periods, though the higher quality buildings (principally within the conservation area to the north) have a degree of coherency in their common materials and colour palettes.

- 3.12 The Site and its surroundings are within the Station Gateway masterplan and Supplementary Planning Document (SPD); forming part of the 'Fire Station Block.' The station and surrounding area have been identified for regeneration and is anticipated to see forthcoming change as the masterplan and SPD are implemented.

Assessments of Significance

Heritage Significance

- 4.1 This section provides a proportionate assessment of the heritage significance of the heritage assets identified in Section 2, in order to provide an appropriate baseline for our assessment of the likely impacts of the application proposals. This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with best practice advice.
- 4.2 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.”⁵*
- 4.3 Historic England has published a best practice advice note⁶ clarifying the NPPF requirements for applicants to describe heritage significance. It explores the assessment of heritage significance as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance informs the design process.
- 4.4 Historic England has also provided further guidance⁷ on its approach to making decisions and offering guidance about all aspects of England’s historic environment. This examines how to assess the contribution of elements of a heritage asset, or within its setting, to its significance in terms of its ‘heritage values’. These include: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. This supplements the established definitions of heritage significance and interests set out in founding legislation and more recent national planning policy and guidance.

Listed Buildings

- 4.5 Listed buildings specifically are defined as designated heritage assets that hold special architectural or historic interest. The principles of selection for listed buildings are published by the Department of Culture Media and Sport⁸ and supported by Historic England’s Listing Selection Guides for each building type⁹.

Conservation Areas

- 4.6 Conservation areas are designated on the basis of their special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Historic England has revised and republished its guidance in respect of conservation

⁵ MHCLG, *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 - Annex 2: Glossary*

⁶ Historic England *Advice Note 12 - Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* 2019

⁷ Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* 2008

⁸ DCMS, *Circular: Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings*, 2018 (revised)

⁹ Historic England, *Listing Selection Guides*: (suite of documents for each Building Type), 2011 onwards as updated

areas which provides a framework for the appraisal and assessment of the special interest of a conservation area.¹⁰

Non-designated Heritage Assets

4.7 RMBC identified non-designated heritage assets based on the following local criteria:

- ***“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.”

Setting

4.8 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.”¹¹

4.9 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. The guidance confirms, at Paragraph 9, that setting itself 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.

4.10 Further guidance on the definition of setting and how it should be taken into account is set out in NPPG. Paragraph 013 (Historic Environment) sets out 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.”

4.11 The high court judgement *Catesby Estates Ltd v Steer* (2018) EWCA Civ 1967 confirmed that historic, social and economic connections are relevant in determining the setting of heritage assets and the contribution it makes to significance.

¹⁰ Historic England (2019) Advice Note 1 (Second Edition) Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management

¹¹ MHCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 – Annex 2: Glossary

4.12 The Historic England guidance sets out a step by step process for the proportionate assessment of the significance of a heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal at Paragraph 19. This involves:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

Maclure Road Conservation Area

Character and appearance

4.13 The Maclure Road Conservation Area is centred on Maclure Road, buildings lining the western side of Richard Street and is set back from Station Road in the south. It is focussed on the townscape of Maclure Road created by the combination of the grade II* listed **Roman Catholic Church of St John the Baptist**, an adjacent extended school and the former Rochdale Fire Station complex, with associated housing for members of the brigade and their families.

4.14 The church is of significance as an impressive example of early 20th century ecclesiastical design inspired by the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul and for the artistic quality of the sanctuary mosaic. It is assessed separately below. The **Fire Station** and **nos. 15-17, 19-21 and 23-25 Maclure Road** have been formally identified by RMBC as non-designated heritage assets. Their significance and setting are considered collectively in this assessment of the conservation area.

4.15 As set out in Section 3, the area surrounding the conservation area developed during the 19th century with the opening of the Richard Street canal basin in 1798 and the arrival of the railway in 1889. There was an existing Roman Catholic Chapel to the west of the site of the current church, which became a convent, and later, a presbytery. The current church was built between 1925 and 1927 and the fire station followed in 1933.

Figure 4.1: View of Maclure Road Conservation Area looking south along Maclure Road



- 4.16 The Fire Station is a long, linear, predominantly two storey building in red brick with a ground floor, central bay, parapet and window surrounds in sandstone ashlar. The symmetrical principal projecting range facing Maclure Road has Neo Georgian characteristics and is comprised of nine bays with upper floor windows corresponding with large fire engine openings at ground floor. The central bay has stone carvings and a shield, beneath an arched window. There are lower flanking wings to the north and south, each with a central entrance, windows either side and tripartite windows at first floor. There is a ventilation shaft above the main entrance and to the rear is a tall hose tower, in the style of a campanile. When built, the hose tower was one of the tallest of these structures in the country. Local history sources indicate that the above average height and campanile design was intended to complement the architecture of the church and to appear as one building in certain viewpoints.¹²
- 4.17 Along with the fire station, 32 cottages for members of the brigade and their families were built along Maclure Road and Richard Street. Historic mapping suggests earlier housing along Richard Street was replaced at this time. The properties along Richard Street are not formally recognised as non-designated heritage assets. They are of modest design, typical of the late 19th to early 20th century, whereas **nos.15 – 25 Maclure Road** were designed to reference the Fire Station stylistically, linked by red brick arches with keystones and with sandstone dressings and pedimented doorcases. These are likely to have been the higher status properties for higher ranking members of the brigade.

- 4.18 Opposite the houses on the west side of Maclure Road is an early 20th century school in red brick with stone dressings. The western elevation has three tall regular gables, but the east facing elevation is asymmetric and the building has been extended northwards, creating an irregular footprint. The School is set back from Maclure Road, beyond a grassed play area, enclosed by an earlier stone flag wall.
- 4.19 There is a more consistent and defined building line along the east of Maclure Road, created by the fire station complex and associated housing. The building line along the west of the street is more irregular, albeit the church establishes a strong frontage and boundary treatments in the form of walling and railings are present. The addition of Metrolink infrastructure, including a raised platform, gantries and overhead line equipment has influenced the character and appearance of the conservation area and the quality of the public realm.
- 4.20 Red brick is the predominant material across the conservation area, with decoration and accents in stone. Architectural styles vary, but buildings tend to have clearly defined proportions and horizontal emphasis is created by string courses and banding. There is a confidence and solidity to the buildings of the conservation area and a high ratio of solid to void. Buildings within the designated area are generally two to three storeys, but vary in height due to the presence of different building typologies and fluctuating floor to ceiling heights. The church and fire station are of increased prominence due their scale, mass and height as well as their distinctive forms.
- 4.21 The essential character and appearance and significance of the conservation area is derived from the architectural distinction and prominence of its principal buildings (the church and fire station), the relative cohesion of the grouping and legibility of the early 20th century townscape they create on Maclure Road. Dwellings on Richard Street were also associated with the fire station complex but are of simplified design. The fire station, hose tower and associated cottages have local historic and architectural significance, as a well-preserved early 20th century fire station complex in a Neo Georgian style.

Contribution made by Setting (physical surroundings and experience of the asset)

- 4.22 The setting of the conservation area is characterised by a mixed urban area. Drake Street to the north is lined by a mix of commercial and residential development from the late Georgian period onwards and there is a combination of areas of open and vacant land (now with planning permission for residential development) and commercial and retail units to the east. The elevated Manchester to Liverpool railway line and Rochdale Railway station dominate to the south. To the east there is a new medical complex (Nye Bevan House) and a grouping of wholesale retail premises and warehouses. There are residential areas beyond.
- 4.23 The conservation area is principally experienced in views northwards and southwards from Maclure Road itself. In these views the architectural interest of its principal buildings and townscape interest can be most readily appreciated. Due to the form and height of the dome of the grade II* listed church and the hose tower of the fire station, these elements have local landmark quality and are experienced in views across a wider area.

- 4.24 Richard Street is less cohesive, but resonance with the dwellings lining the route and the remainder of the fire station complex is legible.
- 4.25 Development and buildings within the setting of the conservation area are highly varied. The Nye Bevan NHS facility to the south west is a taller complex of two linked linear buildings. It is finished in a combination of brick, render and cladding and is of a form, style, height, scale and mass that contrasts with the character and appearance of the conservation area. The original railway station was rebuilt in the 1970s and is now a simplified buff brick single storey unit with a projecting canopy. To the east there is fragmentation. The stone built Masonic Hall is of architectural quality, but the wider surrounding area, beyond the boundary of the conservation area is fragmented and lacks cohesion.

Roman Catholic Church of St John the Baptist (grade II* listed)

Special Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.26 The Church of St John the Baptist is of special interest as an impressive example of early 20th century ecclesiastical design by a promising architect and for the artistic quality of the sanctuary mosaic by Eric Newton of Ludwig Oppenheimer Ltd. It was built to serve a large local Irish community.
- 4.27 The church was designed prior to 1917 by Oswald Hill in the manner of the Hagia Sophia and inspired by the recently completed Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral. Following his death in the First World War, it was then executed by Ernest Bower Norris of Hull Sandy and Norris' Manchester branch. The later internal mosaic scheme was completed by Eric Newton in 1932-33.
- 4.28 The church is in the early Christian Byzantine style, with elements of restrained art deco. It is set out in a cruciform plan, with a large, ferro concrete dome and barrel vaults. It is constructed of red brick with artificial stone dressings. The large dome is 95 foot high and 65 foot in diameter. There is a clerestory of 35 deeply recessed windows with leaded and coloured glass.
- 4.29 The architect, Oswald Hill, was killed during the First World War and, as one of the few examples of his work, is architecturally significant.

Contribution made by Setting (physical surroundings and experience of the asset)

- 4.30 The principal elevation of the Church of St John the Baptist addresses Maclure Road. To the north is the associated St John's RC Primary School which dates from the early 20th century. It is also constructed from red brick but unlike the church has a more typical Rochdale style being comprised of a series of gables and windows with simple sandstone dressings for lintels, cills and banding. To the south is Nye Bevan House, set back behind an area of public open space, and the Metrolink beyond which is Rochdale train station. Opposite is the Maclure Road fire station and associated cottages.
- 4.31 The key view of the church is looking north along Maclure Road where the principal south and east elevations can be experienced together in combination with the dome. Within these views, and along Maclure Road, the visual dialogue between the dome and the campanile tower of the fire station, can be appreciated. The church is the dominant building within the townscape along Maclure Road by virtue of its scale and

unusual form. Due to its height and the local topography of the area, there are glimpsed views of its dome from the wider area. As such, the building has landmark qualities.

- 4.32 Despite its unique form and dominating character, it forms a coherent early 20th century townscape with the school and fire station with associated cottages due to the common use of red brick with sandstone dressings. The aesthetic and townscape attributes of the grouping complement the architectural interest of the listed building.

Deen House (Non-Designated Heritage Asset)

Local Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.33 Deen House was built as an Employment Exchange during the early 20th century in a simplified neo-classical style. It is a simple low brick-built building with a projecting central two storey range and lower, one storey simplified flanking wings and hipped roofs. There is judicious stone detailing above the doors of the central range along with a buff banding between the ground and second floor and cills to windows. The windows are modern uPVC with flat head brick lintels above and security grills. It is unknown whether original doors survive behind applied roller shutter units.
- 4.34 The asset has a degree of local architectural merit in the proportions and restrained detailing of the neo-classical design; albeit eroded by the loss of original windows and addition of roller shutters. It holds local historic interest as an early 20th century former employment exchange.

Contribution made by Setting (physical surroundings and experience of the asset)

- 4.35 Station Road is dominated by the raised railway line along the south of the street. To the north of Deen House is the 1930s fire station and associated housing which wraps around to the east, beyond which are modern large-scale retail units on Richard Street. To the west is the 1950s/1960s single storey retail unit within the southern part of the Site.
- 4.36 The principal elevation of Deen House, in which its local architectural merit can be appreciated, is experienced from Station Road but not as part of a coherent townscape due to the varied surroundings as previously described. As contemporary civic buildings designed in restrained classical styles, executed in brick, there is a degree of group value between Deen House and the fire station. Albeit that relationship is not readily appreciated from Station Road or Maclure Road due to the siting of the buildings and the intervening development (including the Site).
- 4.37 Therefore those elements of setting that contribute to significance are identified as the ability to view the principal elevation from Station Road and the group value with the fire station and associated housing, which is experienced kinetically and sequentially as one moves around the area.

Contribution made by the Site to the Significance of the Assets

- 4.38 The Chicken Shaq in the northern part of the site dates from c.1900. It is brick built with stone accents and detailing and extends to three storeys in height with two prominent gables. The building is late Victorian in style, pre-dates the principal

buildings of the Maclure Road Conservation Area, appears to have been speculatively built, and is stylistically different. It does however resonate with and contribute to the character and appearance and significance of the conservation area and the fire station complex, both in terms of the form and articulation of the building and the quality of materials used. Similarly, its quality and materiality contribute to the townscape value along this part of Maclure Road. The building is however compromised by modern and unsympathetic shopfronts and signage at ground floor, windows have been replaced with uPVC units and alterations have been made to the rear.

- 4.39 The significance of the Church of St John lies in it being an impressive example of early 20th century ecclesiastical design inspired by the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul and for the artistic quality of the sanctuary mosaic. Whilst the Chicken Shaq contributes to the townscape along Maclure Road, it does not materially contribute to that significance beyond the contrasting styles emphasising the distinctive architecture of the church within the Rochdale context.
- 4.40 Due to the intervening distance and development, as well as the buildings being of different styles and periods, the Chicken Shaq is not considered to contribute to the significance of Deen House.
- 4.41 The adjoining building dates from the late 1950s or early 1960s. It is a low single storey building containing a series of separate retail units beneath a curved projecting canopy, supported by columns. It is of concrete and steel construction with a range of altered shopfronts, dominant signage and cladding. The building deviates from the character and appearance of the conservation area due to the diminutive height of the building and the poor quality of its functional design, materials and later modifications. It does so at a key gateway into the conservation area creating an abrupt and uncomfortable terminus to the Maclure Road townscape, which is central to the significance of the conservation area. For these reasons, this part of the Site is concluded to negatively affect the character and appearance of the conservation area and, by extension the fire station complex and Church of St John. Given the limited contribution to significance Deen House draws from its settings, the effect on the non-designated heritage asset is reduced.

Impact Assessment

Summary of legislative and national planning policy context

- 5.1 In determining a future planning application RBC has statutory duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to 'pay special attention' to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area (for land within the designated area), and to 'have special regard' to the desirability of preserving the special interest and setting of listed buildings. Case law has determined that these are matters to be given 'considerable importance and weight' in the planning process.
- 5.2 Paragraph 197 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 199 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 Paragraphs 200 and 201 differentiate between 'substantial' and 'less than substantial harm' and provide a framework for the consideration of harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, where it arises, bearing in mind the considerable importance and weight that must be given to the statutory duties of the 1990 Act.
- 5.5 Paragraph 203 states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining planning applications. In weighing proposals 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.
- 5.6 Paragraph 206 requires that local planning authorities look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets to better reveal their significance. It states 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.
- 5.7 The relevant heritage legislation, national and local planning policy and guidance for consideration of the Proposed Development is set out in full at **Appendix 2**.

Consultation

- 5.8 Pre-application meetings were held with RMBC on 28th September and 16th November 2023 with the former attended by the Conservation Officer who provided comments on the emerging scheme as set out below, along with an explanation of how these

comments have been addressed through further design iterations and the submission documents. The design team's response to the comments were presented to RMBC at the meeting on 16th November.

Table 5.1: Conservation Officer Comments 28 September 2023

Conservation Officer Comment	Design Team Response
Advised to refer to the draft Maclure Road Conservation Area Appraisal for viewpoints	The viewpoints used within the Design and Access Statement correlate with those included in the draft appraisal.
Recommended engagement with Historic England, who had provided comments on the SPD	A pre-application meeting was held with Historic England on 10 th November and their formal feedback letter is included at Appendix 3 of this report.
Agreed prime site for development and with the curved shape. The key issues will be height and mass and ensuring accurate representation to heritage assets in visualisations.	It is confirmed that accurate height data has been used for the visualisations.
Historic England Tall Buildings Guidance ought to be referred to as context (not identifying the Proposed Development as a tall building per se, just approach)	The guidance and considerations highlighted within it have been taken into account in the design development and in the heritage assessment work.
Brick makes the building visually heavy; could there be additional glazing/light material to the upper floor(s)?	The elevations and materiality of the Proposed Development has been revisited in light of the conservation officer comments to add additional glazed elements and change the materiality of the upper floor, as set out in the Design and Access Statement prepared by Leach, Rhodes, Walker Architects (LRW).
Not convinced on the buff brick.	The buff brick has been replaced with a red brick.
Sought further articulation on frontage, e.g. brick detailing	The elevations and materiality of the Proposed Development has been revisited in light of the conservation officer comments including the addition of a brick banding element, as set out in the Design and Access Statement.
Agreed Deen House less sensitive. Requested more glazing on this side elevation but understood fire regulations/maintenance issues.	Further articulation has been added to the elevation adjacent to Deen House to address these comments.

View from the station entrance is important	The view is considered as part of the impact assessment and included within the visualisations.
Public benefits to counter any residual heritage harm identified is important for planning balance.	Noted. The impacts (both positive and negative) on the significance of heritage assets are clearly identified in this Heritage Statement along with the weight to be given to those impacts, in accordance with legislation and planning policy. This in turn has informed the planning balance, set out in the Planning Statement prepared by Plan Red.

The Proposed Development

- 5.9 The Proposed Development seeks the demolition of the existing single storey commercial unit and some demolition at the rear of the retained Chicken Shaq building (29-31 Maclure Road) and its replacement with a new six storey apartment building with commercial ground floor uses including the conversion of 29-31 Maclure Road into apartment use on upper floors and commercial use at ground. A total of 38 one and two bedroom apartments will be created. There is to be no off street parking with a communal cycle store provided for residents. Resident access and bin storage will be from Station Road.

Figure 5.1: CGI of the Proposed Scheme from Rochdale Station Road



- 5.10 This Impact Assessment should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement prepared by LRW. In accordance with the NPPF and Historic England guidance, the following judgements made are based on the effect of the Proposed Development on the significance of the identified assets, rather than whether the development will be visible from them, although this is also a consideration. National

Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides further clarification that it *“is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.”*

- 5.11 This assessment has been informed by Historic England guidance including Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015) and Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition) (2017). Whilst the Proposed Development isn’t considered to be a tall building per se, Historic England Advice Note 4 (2022) was identified by RMBC during pre-application discussions as including relevant considerations for the emerging design. It sets out guidance relating to tall buildings, their impact and how to assess proposals. The guidance highlights the need to consider issues such as location and height parameters, context and local character and high-quality design. These considerations have informed the design development and assessment of impacts on heritage assets.
- 5.12 As previously identified, there is an adopted SPD and masterplan for the Station Gateway area, which includes the Site. The development proposals aim to contribute to the objectives of the SPD through supporting the formation of the gateway experience and arrival and providing a high-quality, high-density residential-led development around the station to further the growth of Rochdale. The residential-led, mixed-use development with active commercial use at ground level, captures the significant opportunity to provide a landmark building at the strategically important station gateway location.
- 5.13 The existing single-storey corner building will be demolished and replaced with the new 6-storey building. The existing building currently is visually unattractive and detracts from the streetscene. It fails to provide the necessary visual cue of arrival at Rochdale from the station or to address the new square to be laid out. The building presents an unattractive front and rear elevations with an incoherent mix of shopfronts and an uncontrolled storage of bins and materials in the rear private access.
- 5.14 The retained 29-31 Maclure Road, operating as the ‘Chicken Shaq’ is of better quality as a building but is compromised by insensitive alterations, shopfront, security and signage details. The building will be refurbished with full reuse of upper floors and replacement of the existing modern shopfronts with a higher quality design
- 5.15 The design of the Proposed Development has responded to the curved site edge to deliver a strong visual form, proposes high-quality brickwork with stone base with feature bands to reflect the form and materiality of the retained buildings 29-31 Maclure Road and other buildings in the Maclure Road Conservation Area. Detailing includes use of chamfered returns to the new building to provide separation and architectural quality to the proposal and arched windows which reference the adjoining Chicken Shaq building. Glazing on the façade rises in twos to add a vertical emphases to counterbalance the strong horizontal lines formed by the curved façade. The upper recessed floor will be clad with metal panels and glazing, set behind a delicate metal railing and will provide a cap to the building representing a traditional roof form. The building design is proposed as a net zero carbon building to set

standards for similar proposals going forward in the regeneration area and providing residents with a high-quality living environment.

Assessment of Impacts on Significance

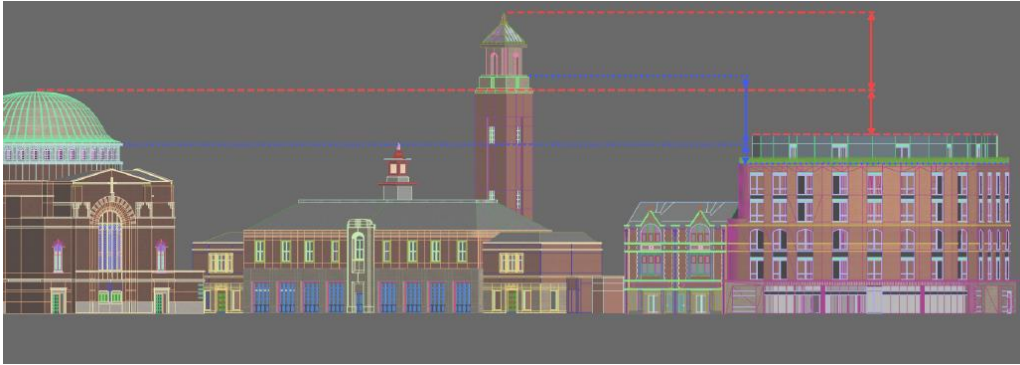
The Principle of Redevelopment

- 5.16 The principle of demolition and redevelopment of the corner retail precinct is positive. The existing building does not contribute to the conservation area or the setting of other heritage assets. Replacing it with a more suitable and contextual form of development provides an opportunity for enhancement. The strategic position of the Site, occupying a corner plot and at a key transport node and point of arrival, supports the case for redevelopment on townscape grounds. There is an opportunity to create a building of greater stature and prominence, to improve definition and legibility and to positively address the street corner and emerging public realm. It is understood that proposals are emerging within the surrounding area for other developments of increased height, scale and mass. The Proposed Development should also be considered in the context of these changing characteristics.

Proposed Height, Scale and Mass

- 5.17 As identified above it *“is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.”* In assessing and quantifying the impact on heritage assets, this impact assessment has considered the specific significance of each asset and how that significance would be affected by the scale, mass and height of the Proposed Development. Changes and juxtaposition in height can add interest and incidence within townscapes and urban settings and even act to emphasise the specific characteristics of a heritage asset. A change in height in itself is therefore not concluded to be automatically harmful but consideration is given to the effects of that change in height and how that in turn affects significance.
- 5.18 One of the key characteristics of the conservation area is the stature and prominence of the church and fire station tower and their roles as local landmarks. It is the combination of the height, distinctive architectural forms and space around the church dome and fire station tower which result in their landmark qualities.
- 5.19 Any increase in height above the prevailing two to three storey development in the surrounding area therefore has potential to reduce the landmark qualities of the church and tower because the differential between those landmark features and the wider context is reduced. At six storeys the Proposed Development would exceed adjoining and nearby building heights within the conservation area. However, as shown in **Figure 5.2** below, the height of the Proposed Development has been kept well below the height of the dome and tower to minimise the reduction in the differential. The dome and tower will remain the tallest elements within the townscape. The set back of the top floor of the proposed building will further reduce the perception of scale and height.

Figure 5.2: Comparative Height Analysis Diagram



- 5.20 The Proposed Development will also be distanced from the church and the fire station, maintaining the 'sky space' around the dome and tower. Sustaining the distinctive forms and character of the church and fire station tower has been considered in the restrained and contextual design approach for the Proposed Development, as set out in more detail below, and will complement rather than compete with or challenge the existing landmarks.
- 5.21 As previously identified, local history sources indicate that the fire station tower was designed with the intent of appearing as the unrealised campanile tower of the church. The dialogue between the two, which is principally appreciated in views along Maclure Road, is therefore a contributory element to significance. The ability to appreciate this relationship will be unaffected by the Proposed Development due to its location and siting at the southern end of Maclure Road.
- 5.22 As set out in more detail in the Design and Access Statement, the new element of the Proposed Development has been set back from Chicken Shaq at the upper levels and the corner has been curved to provide visual separation and a softening of the relationship between the two elements and their change in height. On Station Road, the elevation adjacent to Deen House has been articulated to soften the transition between the one storey wing of the former employment exchange and the Proposed Development.

Figure 5.3: Detailed elevational treatment on the return elevation adjacent to Deen House



Design and Appearance

5.23 The Proposed Development takes a considered and contextual approach in its design being executed in red brick with clear proportions, articulation, varied fenestration and recessed upper floors. The materials, colour palette, subtle detailing (e.g. arched windows, brickwork) and regular rhythm of opening resonate with the early 20th century townscape of the conservation area and Deen House (see **Figure 5.4**). The Proposed Development will have a higher void to solid relationship than the surrounding context to allow for active frontages and to address the conservation officer's comments regarding increased glazing.

Figure 5.4: Maclure Road elevation of the Proposed Development



Chicken ShaQ

- 5.24 The local studies archives and online sources were consulted to obtain historic images or plans of the building to inform restoration work. However, there was not sufficient information to undertake an informed restoration that was not conjectural in nature. The proposed approach therefore looks to replace the existing low quality shop fronts, with a higher quality, subtle and contemporary design to tie into the adjacent new development. The existing shopfronts, cladding to the pilasters and lighting would be removed with the replacement details would be confirmed depending on what previous finishes are revealed behind. The rear of the buildings, which have later extensions and alterations will be rationalised as part of the Proposed Development.
- 5.25 The proposed works will constitute an improvement on the current character and appearance of the Chicken Shaq building and in doing so enhance a positive contributor within the conservation area and the wider townscape.

Figure 5.5: Proposed alterations to the Chicken Shaq Building



Conclusions on Impact and Application of Legislation and the NPPF

- 5.26 The Proposed Development will enhance the townscape at the south of Maclure Road and balances the objective of creating a landmark at the station arrival with the need for a contextual approach that maintains the primacy of the Church of St John and the fire station as key historic landmarks within the conservation area.
- 5.27 It is concluded that there will be a slight impact on the landmark qualities of the **Church of St John** (grade II* listed building) and the **fire station** (locally listed building) due to the height of the Proposed Development, which will reduce the contrast in height between the church and fire station tower and the surrounding context. As previously identified, the Proposed Development has been kept well below the height of the dome and tower to minimise the reduction in the differential. The dome and tower will remain the tallest elements within the townscape. As the photomontages (included in the Design and Access Statement) show, at a point along the railway line, views of the tower and dome will be interrupted for the length of the Proposed Development. These views are kinetic and the landmarks will continue to be visible elsewhere along the line.
- 5.28 The impact on significance is limited to only that aspect of significance which is drawn from its landmark qualities. The church's significance as an impressive example of early 20th century ecclesiastical design by a promising architect and for the artistic quality of the sanctuary mosaic by Eric Newton of Ludwig Oppenheimer Ltd are unaffected. Similarly, the fire station will continue to be appreciable as a good example of an early 20th century fire station and its form and function legible.

- 5.29 The Proposed Development will be distanced from and will retain the 'skyspace' around the assets and the restrained design will complement rather than compete with the architecture of the church and fire station.
- 5.30 For these reasons, it is concluded that the impact on the Church of St John is 'less than substantial' in NPPF terms and at the very lowest end of that scale. In relation to the fire station (locally listed), it is concluded that the impact is slight.
- 5.31 By extension, there is an impact on the significance of the **Maclure Road Conservation Area**, given the importance of the two assets to its character and appearance. Similarly, this is 'less than substantial' in NPPF terms, and at the lowest end of that scale.
- 5.32 Therefore in relation to the Church of St John the Baptist (grade II* listed building) and the Maclure Road Conservation Area, NPPF paragraph 202 is engaged which states:
- "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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."*
- 5.33 PPG confirms that public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the NPPF. It also identifies that 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.
- 5.34 The identified harm has been weighed against the public benefits set out in the accompanying Planning Statement prepared by Plan Red, bearing in mind the considerable importance and weight that must be given to the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 5.35 Heritage benefits have been identified arising from the positive effects on the character and appearance arising from the enhancement to the townscape through the improvements to the Chicken Shaq building and the redevelopment of the single storey retail development with a development that is high-quality and contextual. The development will enhance the quality of the townscape within the setting of the church, removing a detracting element from its setting and the proposed curve resonates with the curve of the church dome.
- 5.36 Those elements of setting that contribute to the significance of **Deen House (locally listed)** (i.e. proximity to the station and the 1930s fire station) will not be affected by the development. Deen House does not currently exist in a historic townscape along Station Road. As an individual building it has a restrained classical style typical of the

period and a diminutive character. The ability to appreciate the significance of the asset will not be affected by the Proposed Development. It is therefore concluded that the significance of Deen House will be sustained.

- 5.37 In regard to the slight harm identified in relation to the significance of the fire station (locally listed building), in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 203 a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the local significance of the asset. The impact is therefore a material consideration to be given a proportional degree of weight in the planning balance.

Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of Rochdale Development Agency in connection with an application for full planning permission for a residential led mixed-use development at Land at Station Road, Rochdale. The full description of development is as follows:

“Demolition of 33-41 Maclure Road and partial demolition at rear of 29-31 Maclure Road and Conversion of 29-31 Maclure Road and Erection of a 6-storey building to provide 38 apartments (Use Class C3) across combined upper floors with ground floor commercial use (Use Classes E(a), E(b), E(c) and Ee), associated infrastructure and ancillary works.”

- 6.2 The Site is an irregularly shaped area of land occupied by two existing buildings. In the southern part of the site, occupying the corner of Maclure Road with Station Road, is a modern single storey flat roofed building containing a number of retail units. To the north is a two storey late Victorian brick building, with stone dressings, sub-divided into two commercial units (known locally as the ‘Chicken Shaq’).
- 6.3 The part of the Site which is occupied by the Chicken Shaq falls within the Maclure Road Conservation Area. The conservation area was designated in 2006 and is centred on a small stretch of townscape along Maclure Road which encompasses the grade II* Roman Catholic Church of St John and the locally listed former fire station (now the Greater Manchester Fire Service Museum). Deen House (locally listed) is situated to the east of the Site.
- 6.4 In determining the submitted full planning application, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) has statutory duties under s66(1) and s72(1) to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the Church of St John and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Maclure Road Conservation Area. The setting of conservation areas is not protected by primary legislation; however the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does state that the setting of a designated heritage asset (including conservation areas) can contribute to their significance.
- 6.5 Growth to the south of Rochdale was precipitated by the development of glebe land from the late 18th century, most notably the construction of the canal basin at Richard Street. However, the Site and its immediate surroundings developed later, following the location of Rochdale train station in 1889, after which Maclure Road was laid out as a more direct connection to Drake Street and the town centre. Even then, the area’s development was relatively slow-paced; whilst the ‘Chicken Shaq’ building in the north of the Site was built c.1900, it stood isolated until the 1920s and 1930s when the Church of St John the Baptist, the church and associated housing and an employment exchange were erected. The corner plot opposite the station entrance within the south of the Site remained vacant and was only developed in the late 1950s/early 1960s.
- 6.6 The junction of Station Road and Maclure Road has changed a number of times since it was laid out c.1900 and today provides a relatively open character due to the width of the junction and set back of buildings along the west of Maclure Road at its southern

end. The historic tram network was removed, and replaced with a roundabout and public realm, to later be reinstated as part of the Metrolink in 2013. Today, the area is characterised by buildings of differing styles and periods, though the higher quality buildings (principally within the conservation area to the north) have a degree of coherency in their common materials and colour palettes.

- 6.7 The Site and its surroundings are within the Station Gateway masterplan and Supplementary Planning Document (SPD); forming part of the 'Fire Station Block.' The station and surrounding area have been identified for regeneration and is anticipated to see forthcoming change as the masterplan and SPD are implemented.
- 6.8 A slight degree of harm has been identified in relation to the Church of St John (grade II* listed) and the Maclure Road Conservation Area due to the impact of the Proposed Development on the landmark qualities of the church and the fire station tower. NPPF Paragraph 202 is therefore engaged and the 'less than substantial harm' should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals. This includes the positive effects on the on the character and appearance of the conservation area arising from the enhancement to the townscape through the improvements to the Chicken Shaq building and the redevelopment of the single storey retail development with a development that is high-quality and contextual. The development will enhance the quality of the townscape within the setting of the church, removing a detracting element from its setting and the proposed curve resonates with the curve of the church dome.
- 6.9 A slight degree of harm has also been concluded in relation to fire station (locally listed) due to the effect on the landmark qualities of its tower. In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 203 a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the local significance of the asset.
- 6.10 Those elements of setting that contribute to the significance of Deen House (locally listed) (i.e. proximity to the station and the 1930s fire station) will not be affected by the development and therefore no harm to the asset's significance has been identified.

Appendix 1: Legislation, National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance

National Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

Section 72(1) requires that *“special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance.”*

The concept of ‘preserve’ has been interpreted through case law to mean ‘to cause no harm’.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

The proposals for the site should be considered in light of policy and guidance in respect of heritage assets. The statutory duties, national policy, and regional and local plan policy and guidance relevant to the Proposed Scheme are summarised below:

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March 2012 as the full statement of Government planning policies covering all aspects of the planning process. A revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in July 2018. A revision was issued in September 2023, which replaced the previous versions published in March 2012, revised in July 2018, updated in February 2019 and revised again in July 2021.

The glossary of the NPPF (Annex 2) defines conservation as the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

One of the twelve core planning principles of the NPPF is that planning should:

“conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.”

Chapter 16 outlines the Government’s guidance regarding conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Paragraph 194 outlines the information required to support planning applications affecting heritage assets. It states that applicants should provide a description of the significance of any

heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

With regard to determining such planning applications, Paragraph 197 provides that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage assets, and 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 199 further outlines that local planning authorities should give great weight to the asset's conservation when considering the impact on a Proposed Scheme on the significance of a designated asset. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight should be. Annex 2: Glossary defines conservation (for heritage policy) as:

"The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."

It also specifies that any harm to, or loss, of significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 201 outlines that local planning authorities should refuse consent where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance, unless it can be demonstrated that this is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh such harm or loss, or a number of other tests can be satisfied. Paragraph 202 concerns proposals which will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Here harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.

In considering development affecting non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 203 only requires that the effect of an application on the significance of such an asset should be taken into account in determining the application. It requires decision makers, in weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, to make a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Paragraph 206 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.

National Planning Practice Guidance, 2021

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was first issued by the Government as a web resource and living document, including a category on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. This is intended to provide more detailed guidance and information with regard to the implementation of national policy set out in the NPPF (now 2023 revision).

Historic England (2015) Good Practice Advice Note 2, Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment

GPA Note 2 provides information to assist in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework and the related guidance given in the National Planning

Practice Guidance (NPPG). These include; assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.

It provides a suggested staged approach to decision-making where there may be a potential impact on the historic environment:

- 1. 'Understand the significance of the affected assets;*
- 2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;*
- 3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the Framework;*
- 4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;*
- 5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change;*
- 6. Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.'*

Historic England (2016): Advice Note 2, Making Changes to Heritage Assets

This document provides general advice according to different categories of intervention in heritage assets, including repair, restoration, addition and alteration, as well as on works for research alone, based on the following types of heritage asset: buildings and other structures; standing remains including earthworks; buried remains and marine sites; and larger heritage assets including conservation areas, landscapes, including parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites. It is intended to be useful to owners, developers, local planning authorities and others in considering works to all heritage assets.

Historic England (2017) Good Practice Advice Note 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition)

The guidance focusses on the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes. The guidance clarifies that there can be a distinction between views that are valued for reasons other than their contribution to heritage significance such as 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. It also clarifies that the contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting.

Paragraph 9 of the guidance states that setting is not itself a heritage asset. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.

The guidance highlights a series of other considerations that can be relevant to the assessing the impact of development such as 'change over time', 'cumulative change', 'access and setting', 'buried assets and setting', 'designed settings', 'setting and urban design', and 'setting and economic viability'.

It is identified within the guidance that views which contribute more to understanding the significance of a heritage asset include the following:

- Those where the composition within the view was a fundamental aspect of the design or function of the heritage asset.
- Those where town- or village-scape reveals views with unplanned or unintended beauty.
- Those with historical associations.
- Those with cultural associations.
- Those where relationships between the asset and other heritage assets or natural features or phenomena are particularly relevant.

As set out above, a staged approach to assessment is advocated involving identification of the assets that may be affected, assessing the degree to which setting makes a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset or allows significance to be appreciated, assessing the effects of the Proposed Scheme and exploring ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

In assessing the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage assets or allow significance to be appreciated, the key attributes of the heritage asset should be addressed and then the following considered:

- The physical surroundings of the asset and its relationship with other assets;
- The asset's intangible associations with its surroundings, and patterns of use;
- The contribution made by noise, smells etc to significance; and
- The way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated.

The Step 2 Checklist provides a list of potential setting attributes that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance under the headings 'The asset's physical surroundings' and 'Experience of the asset'. The Step 3 Checklist provides a list of potential attributes of a development affecting setting that may help to elucidate its implications for the significance of the heritage asset including the 'Location and siting of development', the 'Form and appearance of development', 'Wider effects of the development' and 'Permanence of the development'

Historic England (2019) Advice Note 1, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2nd edition)

This advice document sets out a series of conservation principles and guidance regarding the management of conservation areas. It outlines the fundamentals of designation, and,

importantly, puts in place processes for character appraisals which may be used to manage development in the area moving forward. It sets an over-arching objective for character appraisals as documents which understand and articulate why the area is special and what elements within the area contribute to this special quality and which don't. Having done this, it outlines an approach to assessments of special interest which uses desk and field-based inquiry.

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

This advice note provides guidance with regard to the NPPF requirement for applicants for heritage and other consents to describe heritage significance, to help local planning authorities make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets. It explores the assessment of heritage significance as part of a stage approach to decision-making, in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposals. It also describes the relationship with archaeological desk-based assessments and field evaluations, as well as Design & Access Statements.

Historic England (2022) Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4 (2nd ed)

This advice note provides advice on planning for tall buildings within the historic environment. It is intended to support stakeholders in dealing with tall buildings proposals within the legislative and planning framework relevant to the historic environment, focussing on: plan-making and the importance of a plan-led approach to tall building development; the information needed to support plan-making and to assess and determine individual development proposals at application stage, and; how to identify appropriate locations for tall buildings and define design parameters in relation to the historic environment.

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Rochdale Core Strategy

The Rochdale Core Strategy was adopted in 2016. Policy P2 - Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage - states the borough's heritage will be protected through:

- (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.”*

Places for Everyone Plan – Modifications Version 2023

Nine planning authorities in Greater Manchester, including Salford City Council, are in the process of preparing a joint development plan (to 2037) known as ‘Places for Everyone’. The Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2022 and examined in public hearing sessions between November 2022 and July 2023. A series of main modifications are now being considered through public consultation, with a view to the Plan being adopted in 2024. The advanced stage of the draft Plan means that it can now be afforded weight in the planning process.

Draft Policy JP-P2 (Heritage) states “*we will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Opportunities will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester’s distinct character, identity and sense of place.*”

Local Plans will set out the key elements which contribute to the district’s identity, character and distinctiveness and which should be the priority for conserving and enhancing in the future and demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment and the heritage values of sites, buildings or areas and their relationship with their surroundings. This knowledge should be used to inform the positive management and integration of our heritage by:

- (i) *Setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making;*
- (ii) *Ensuring that the heritage significance of a site or area is considered in accordance with national planning policy in the planning and design process and opportunities for interpretation and local engagement are optimised;*
- (iii) *Integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, with creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place;*
- (iv) *Delivering positive benefits that sustain and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic vitality, accessibility and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing; and*

- (v) *Exploring opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that restoration of historic buildings offer.*

Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm. These include historic town centres, places of worship, historic transport routes including the canal network, industrial buildings and structures including textile mills, farmsteads and other sites, buildings and areas of identified archaeological, architectural, artistic and/or historic value."

Appendix 2: Historic England Pre-application Letter

Kerrie Melrose
Turley
1 New York Street
Manchester
M1 4HD

23 November 2023

Dear Kerrie

Request for Pre-application Advice

CORNER PLOT ROCHDALE

Thank you for arranging the meeting 10 November 2023 regarding the proposals for the above site. On the basis of those discussions and the documents provided, we offer the following advice.

Advice

Significance

The application site is partially located within a conservation area and the following heritage assets have been included within a wider heritage impact assessment. Historic England agrees the assets that most likely could be affected by the proposals are the Maclure Road Conservation Area and Grade II* Listed Saint John the Baptist church located within it.

The significance of the Maclure Road Conservation Area lies in its survival as an early 20th century settlement planned around the relocated Rochdale Fire Station. Buildings are characterised by the use of smooth engineered red brick and dressed sandstone, with slate roofs. The former fire station building itself and the church of Saint John the Baptist directly opposite dominate the area and are the exceptions to an otherwise low-rise and uniform street scene.

Saint John the Baptist is the only listed building in the conservation area. It has exceptional heritage value, and its artistic and architectural interests are reflected in its designation as a Grade II* listed building. The church dominates the street scene and contrasts with the smaller scale of the surrounding housing emphasising its prominence.

Another key feature of the conservation area is the former fire station tower overlooking the drill yard. This is a non-designated heritage asset that positively contributes to the significance of the conservation area and is one of the town's historic landmarks. It is built in the style of a campanile bell tower, reflecting its location opposite the listed

church.

Impact

The proposals seek to demolish the corner plot buildings at 33-41 Maclure Road and redevelop the site with a 6-storey mixed use scheme. The buildings at 29-31 Maclure Road (Chicken Shaq) will be retained and refurbished as part of the scheme. The works will be part of a larger scheme of redevelopment in the Rochdale Station gateway area, which will include improvements to the public realm around the site.

It is clear the proposals will result in a significantly taller building than the existing structures on the site. This will result in a small degree of harm to the conservation area and setting of the Grade II* listed Saint John the Baptist Church and undesignated former Fire Station and tower.

We accept that although a small degree of harm will result from the proposals, there will be significant improvements to the current situation on the site, and to the buildings at 29-31 Maclure Road through their renovation and inclusion in the scheme. If executed as they are shown in the proposal CGI drawings, the redevelopment of the site will provide a safer and more inviting entrance to Rochdale from the station area. We also acknowledge the massing, design and stepping back of the building has been designed to lessen impacts.

We also consider the proposed associated public realm improvements and proposals to integrate and display elements of the site history, local materiality, and fabric within the new buildings and external landscaping to be positive and to be an improvement on the current situation.

Policy

The proposals would affect a conservation area and the setting of a listed building, therefore there is a requirement to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area (s.72, 1990 Act) and to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings s.16, 62, 1990 Act).

National policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is articulated in section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These policies state that assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (NPPF, 189) and that when considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to an asset's conservation (NPPF, 199). Where it is identified that harm will be caused, the decision maker should be satisfied that this is supported by a clear and convincing justification (NPPF, 200) and that the public benefits that it would bring about would outweigh the harm (NPPF, 202).

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets should look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal significance.

Position

Historic England welcomes the opportunity to consider these proposals at pre-application stage. Based on the information provided we do not wish to raise significant concerns about these plans and do not have an objection to the principle of what is proposed.

We would strongly encourage the design and materiality to be executed in line with the proposal CGI drawings, and the associated street works and public realm improvements to take place in conjunction with the development of this plot, in order to maximise the public benefits of the scheme and balance the small degree of harm that will be caused.

Recommendation

Please note that this letter concludes our free round of pre-application advice. We recommend that you continue discussions with Rochdale Council's Conservation Officer without our continued involvement. We look forward to being consulted on these plans at application stage.

Thank you for involving us at the Pre-application stage. The above advice is the response that we would give if the same proposals were put forward unamended for statutory approval.

Yours sincerely

Louise Davies
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
E-mail: louise.davies@historicengland.org.uk

CORNER PLOT ROCHDALE

Request for Pre-application Advice

List of information on which the above advice is based

- Corner Plot Rochdale – Historic England Presentation, including Proposed Plans and Elevations, and Red Brick CGIs
- Rochdale Station Area Supplementary Planning Document
- Maclure Road Conservation Area Appraisal

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