

# Manchester Old Road

## Conservation Area & Adjoining Neighbourhoods

Prepared on behalf of Muller Property Group

### Character Study

*March 2023*

# PARKFIELD HOUSE

MANCHESTER OLD ROAD, MIDDLETON



**CHARACTER STUDY**

MARCH 2023

MÜLLER



Archi-Scape

A Winnington Hall, Winnington Lane,  
Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 4DU

T 01606 654983

M 07884401777

E C.Brearley@Archi-Scape.net

The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without written consent of Archi-Scape Ltd.

Contributors:

|               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Client        | Muller Property Group |
| Architectural | Archi-Scape           |
| Planning      | Asteer Planning       |
| Heritage      | Nexus Heritage        |
|               |                       |

Document Control:

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Issue Date      | March 2023   |
| Job Number      | 01-123-0012  |
| Document Status | For Planning |
| Revision        |              |
| Authors         | RA, RS       |
| Checked By      | CB           |
| Authorised By   | CB           |

# CONTENTS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 Introduction
- 1.02 Study Location

## 2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.01 Planning Policy Context

## 3. GENERAL CHARACTER & USE

- 3.01 Land Use
- 3.02 Building Use
- 3.03 Route Hierarchy
- 3.04 Public Realm & Open Spaces

## 4. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT & INTEREST

- 4.01 Historic Development
- 4.02 Building Age
- 4.03 Designated & Non Designated Heritage Assets
- 4.04 History of the Conservation Area
- 4.05 Alterations
- 4.06 Lost Assets
- 4.07 Fragmented Aspects

## 5. BUILT FORM & ARCHITECTURE

- 5.01 Scale & Massing
- 5.02 Facade Materials
- 5.03 Architectural Detailing
- 5.04 Prominent Contributors
- 5.05 Neutral & Negative Contributors

## 6. LOCALLY IMPORTANT BUILDINGS

- 6.01 Designated Heritage Assets
- 6.02 Non Designated Heritage Assets

## 7. SPATIAL ANALYSIS

- 7.01 Settlement Patterns

## 8. OPEN SPACE & LANDSCAPE

- 8.01 Green Infrastructure

## 9. SETTING, GATEWAYS & VIEWS

- 9.01 Gateways & Key Views
- 9.02 Neighbouring Character Areas

## 10. ASSESSMENT OF CHARACTER

- 10.01 Character Assessment



# INTRODUCTION

# 1.01 INTRODUCTION



Rapid assessments (Level 2) are based on external observation (carried out on foot) of the whole of the area, sometimes supplemented by internal inspection of a small number of buildings. They rely on extensive use of historic maps and directories, but the full range of primary sources will not be exploited systematically. Depending on the complexity of the evidence, they can be undertaken for areas as large as several square kilometres in extent or for areas as small as a single street. A rapid assessment will additionally:

- narrate the origins and evolution of the area, identifying the main drivers of change;
- identify the range of landscape and building types, their dates and forms, and relate them to the wider evolution of the area;
- offer a summation, at one or more epochs, of the historic area;
- distinguish, where appropriate, a series of character areas, and describe and explain the origins of their distinctive characteristics;
- identify which areas or individual assets, if any, merit more detailed assessment

Historic England

## Introduction

This Character Study has been prepared by Archi-Scape Ltd, supported by Nexus Heritage, on behalf of Muller Property Group to supplement a Detailed Planning Application for the redevelopment of Parkfield House, Manchester Old Road, Middleton, Greater Manchester. The development proposals comprise the demolition of the existing Parkfield House Building to be replaced by a new residential care home and a number of town houses proposed within the associated grounds.

## Purpose of Study

Archi-Scape have been commissioned by Muller Property Group to compile a detailed character study to examine the character of the Manchester Old Road Conservation Area (referred to from here on in as CA), key approaches to the CA and immediate adjoining neighbourhoods in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the local vernacular, character traits and qualities of the area. This study and subsequent understanding of the local character has informed and helped to shape design proposals for the application.

## Scope & Content

This Study has been undertaken with reference to the Historic England document *Understanding Place Historic Area Assessments* and can be considered as a Rapid Assessment (Level 2).

The study is assembled through a number of key chapters:

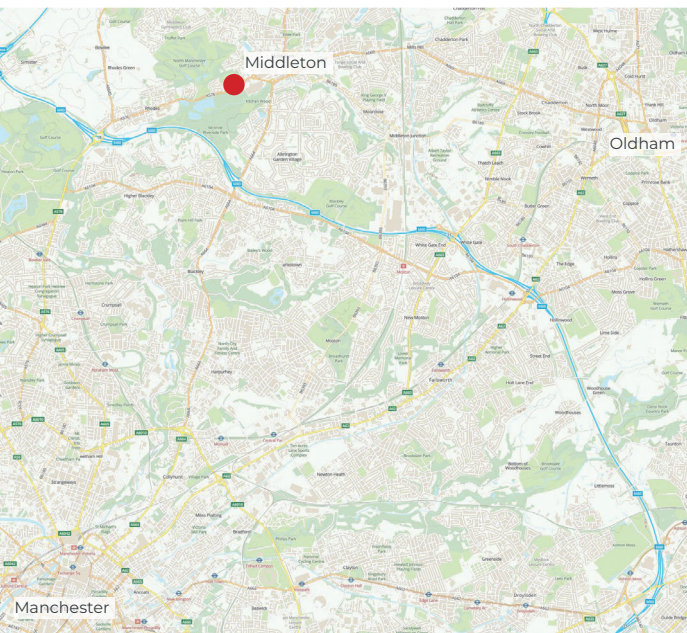
- **Planning Policy Context** - a brief overview as to relevant planning policy associated with the site and CA;
- **General Character & Use** - an examination as to existing land use, road hierarchy and the relationships between unbuilt and developed areas;
- **Historic Development & Interest** - a historic narrative demonstrating how the area has evolved through development as well as what makes the CA special in terms of its history, character and appearance. An identification with regards to what has been lost, where integrity remains as well as what aspects of the CA have been heavily altered or fragmented over time;
- **Built Form & Architecture** - a description and illustration of prominent architectural features of the CA in terms of scale, form, materials, architectural detailing, styles, positioning of buildings in relation to the highway and plot boundaries. A summary as to positive and negative contributors;
- **Locally Important Buildings** - an outline of important buildings and monuments and their defining architectural features;
- **Spatial Analysis** - a synopsis settlement patterns and urban grain configurations;
- **Open Space & Landscape** - a description of surrounding open spaces and landscape connections, their use and functionality;
- **Setting, Gateways & Views** - an overview of the townscape, surrounding landscape, prominent gateways into the CA as well as key views or sight lines in and out of the CA;
- **Assessment of Character** - a defined evaluating summary of the historic character, the key ingredients and an identification of capacity for change or enhancement to the CA.

## 1.02 STUDY LOCATION

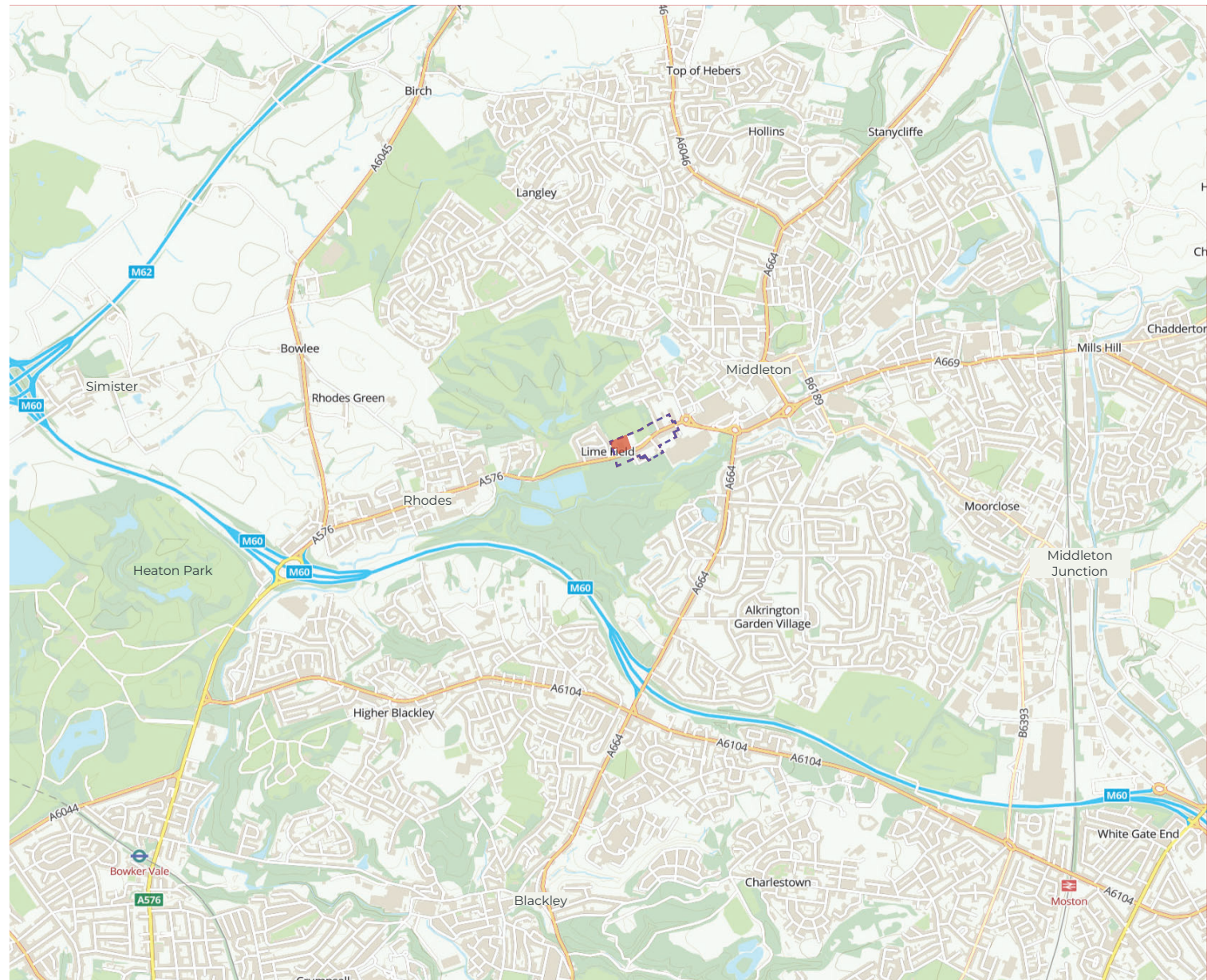
### Location and context

The application site, shaded red with the adjacent Local Setting Map, sits within the Manchester Old Road Conservation Area (CA) to west of Middleton, with in the Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester, denoted by the blue dashed line.

The compact CA occupies an area of circa 5.436 ha, and is dissected by Manchester Old Road. Once part of the open countryside between Middleton and Rhodes, the CA now has a residential character, leading from the urban area of Middleton to the east to a more verdant landscape with Limefield Leisure Park to the immediate north and Alkington Woods and Nature Reserve to the south and west.



Regional setting



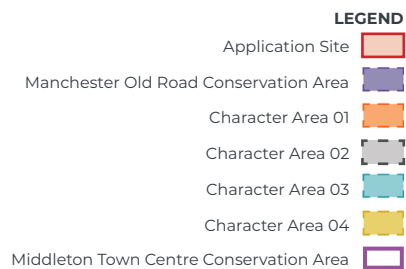
Local setting

# 1.02 STUDY LOCATION

## Location and context

An initial desktop study, completed prior to the study area walkover, identified a number of adjoining character areas to the site and in addition to the CA, which have subsequently also been investigated to ensure the Study is comprehensively informed.

These have been identified due to their proximity to the CA and together will facilitate a thorough understanding of the wider surrounding vernacular.



Study Character Areas

## 1.02 STUDY LOCATION



Satellite image of study area

# PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## 2.01 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development comprises three parts which include economic, social and environmental. These dimensions should be seen as a golden thread running through plan making and decision taking processes. Section 12 Achieving well-designed places, paragraph 126 makes specific reference to good design as a fundamental aspect of sustainable development.

Paragraph 130 requires developments to:

- Function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- Be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Paragraph 197 states in determining applications, local planning 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;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

### Rochdale Core Strategy Policies

**Policy P1 - Improving Image** requires high quality design in all new developments. This will be ensured through:

- Requiring design which demonstrates innovation and originality;
- Working with developers of major developments to incorporate public art in the design of buildings;
- Help to green the urban environment, by securing tree planting on sites;
- Promoting the development and reuse of underutilised land and buildings, and maximising the potential for heritage assets to provide a sense of place.

**Policy P1 - Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage** aims to protect and enhance the borough's character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the qualities of its landscapes, utilising the considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. This is to be achieved, among others, by:

- Requiring new developments to integrate successfully with key natural features;
- Require new developments to take opportunities to protect and open up important views;
- Conserve and enhance townscape character.

The borough's heritage is to be protected by:

- Conserving, enhancing and promoting both statutory and non statutory key heritage assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas;
- Conserving, enhancing and utilising non statutory heritage assets of local interest;
- Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes;
- Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard.

**Policy P3 - Improving Design of New Development** requires all new developments to adhere to high standards of design. The following design principles should be adhered to:

- Enhance the boroughs identity and sense of place, respecting positive context with regard to scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings;
- Ensuring development contributes positively to the townscape and are well proportioned;
- Incorporating measures that design out crime;
- Provide an appropriate mix of uses, considering the needs of all sections of society;
- Ensure a development is easy to move through and get around, especially for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, disabled people and emergency service vehicles.



## 2.01 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- Provide a hierarchy of routes, streets and spaces, relating positively to visual connections between the development and its surrounding;
- Ensure that the intended functions of buildings and spaces are easily understood, and their entrances appropriately located and visible;
- Ensure buildings can be easily adapted to meet future/alternative needs of occupants;
- Minimise impact upon the environment, and help adapt to the impacts of climate change, including by re-using existing buildings and materials (maximising the benefits of existing embodied energy) and utilising sustainable drainage;
- Design buildings and spaces so that quality and appearance can be maintained over time;
- Reduce the monotony and visual impact of car parking areas by using substantial and well integrated landscaping.

### Unitary Development Plan policies

**Policy BE17** New Development Affecting Conservation Areas notes that development proposals will be permitted that preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area. The following principles will be taken into account:

- The relationship to existing buildings and sites and surroundings;
- Design, including elevations, roof form, materials, finishes and detailing;
- Retention, replacement and restoration of historic features and details of buildings;
- Design and siting of car parking and servicing facilities.

### The Middleton Masterplan

The CA falls within the boundaries of the Middleton Town Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan looks to create a town centre which is beautiful and exciting, that celebrates the best of the town's heritage, geography, and population. The emphasis in all the framework plans is on establishing a connected and characterful place with high value placed on Middleton's heritage and green assets with the creation of a network of high-quality public spaces to complement them.

