

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT MIDDLETON SHOPPING CENTRE

Heritage Statement
for Middleton SC Limited
April 2023

WILLIAMS.
GALLAGHER.

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SHOPPING CENTRE**

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NOTICE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf Middleton SC Ltd and accompanies 2 no. applications for works to Units G34 – G46 and land to the south of Middleton Shopping Centre ('the Shopping Centre'):
- application for the refurbishment of the shopfronts of Units G34 – G46 (submitted under Planning Portal Ref: PP-11993776); and
 - application for the introduction of an area of 8 no. short stay parking bays (plus 2 no. disabled parking bays and 10 cycle spaces) and associated works (including the introduction of a new pedestrian crossing, planters and security bollards) (submitted under Planning Portal Ref: PP-11992543).
- 1.2 Units G34 – G36 are neither statutorily or locally listed. They are however, alongside the land to the south where the parking bays are proposed, adjacent to the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area which is a designated heritage asset. A Heritage Statement has therefore been requested by officers in order to meet the requirements of the *Validation of Planning Applications – Local List* (October 2022).
- 1.3 This Heritage Statement has been prepared having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirement for the level of detail and the description of the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, to be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (Para 194).
- 1.4 It is comprised of the following sections:
- Section 2 summarises the legal and policy framework of relevance to the proposed works alongside relevant guidance;
 - Section 3 provides a description of the site and its heritage context; and
 - Section 4 provides a proportionate assessment of the proposed works on the Conservation Area.

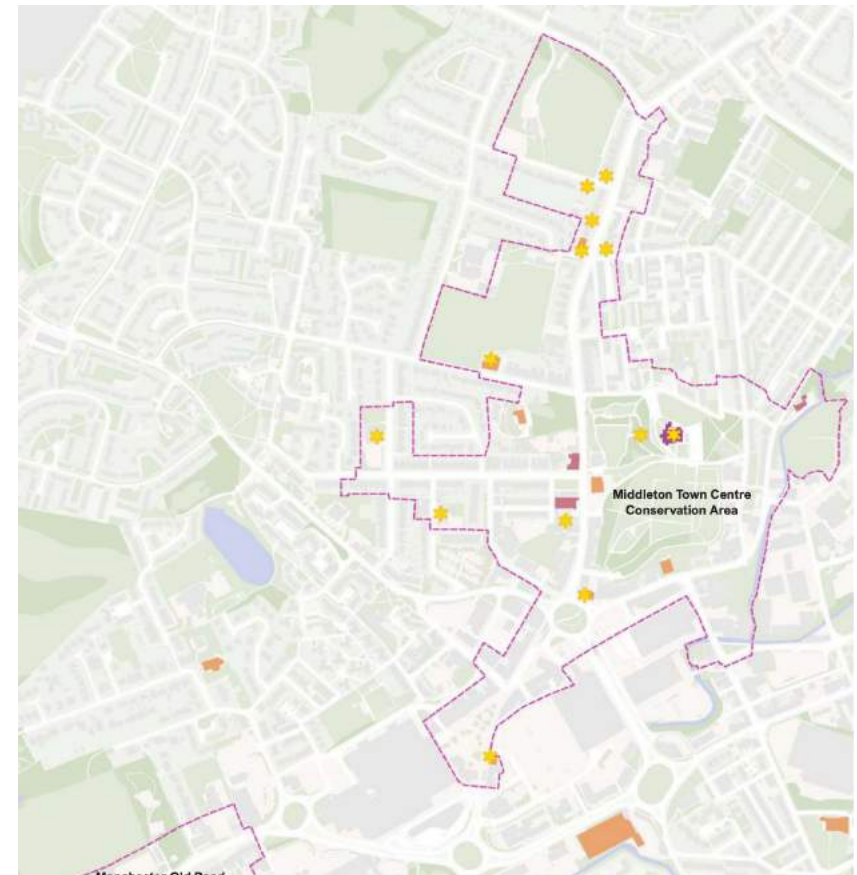


Figure 11: Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area
Source: Middleton Town Centre Masterplan 2022

2.0 HERITAGE LEGISLATION, POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 2.1 In preparing this Heritage Statement, we have had regard to the following legislation, policy and guidance.

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) 2021

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Paragraph 194 states that local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting to a level of detail proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 195 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset), taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be), irrespective of the degree of harm (less than substantial, substantial, or total loss).

Paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to, or loss of, grade II listed buildings and grade II registered parks and gardens should be exceptional. Substantial harm to, or loss of, assets of the highest significance should be wholly exceptional.

Paragraph 201 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

Paragraph 202 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

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

NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE (NPPG)

Paragraphs 003-005 provides direction on decision-making as regards heritage assets.

Paragraph 006 Reference ID: 18a-006-20190723 confirms that 'significance' is defined in the NPPF Glossary as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest'. The basis of any heritage assessment is the identification and analysis of a heritage asset to identify individual 'values' (sometimes called 'interest' or 'merit') and how these come together to form its overall 'significance'.

ROCHDALE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Core Strategy (October 2016)

Policy P2 (Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage) states that the Council will protect and enhance the Borough's character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the

qualities of its landscapes, utilising the considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. It goes on to state, inter alia, that the Council will look to conserve, enhance and promote key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings.

Unitary Development Plan (June 2006)

Policy BE/17 (New Development Affecting Conservation Areas) states that development proposals will be permitted that preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area.

In assessing a proposal, the following principles – where relevant – will be taken into account:

- its relationship to existing buildings, the site and its surroundings;*
- its design – including elevations, roof form, materials, finishes and detailing;*
- the retention, replacement and restoration of historic features and details of buildings, and – in the public realm – walls, paving and street furniture;*
- the retention and enhancement of landscaped areas, trees and natural features;*
- the design of new shop fronts (and replacements and/or alterations to those existing) should reflect the character or appearance of the conservation area, consistent with the provisions of Policy BE/5;*
- the design and siting of advertisements, new street furniture, paving and other highway surfaces and related structures (e.g. lighting and signs); and*
- the design and siting of car parking and servicing facilities.*

MIDDLETON TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL (JANUARY 2008)

This document appraise the elements of the special interest, character and appearance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area, including its archaeology, historic associations, architecture and environment. The appraisal provides a basis for development control, improvement initiatives and the future management of the area.

STATEMENTS OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE: ANALYSING SIGNIFICANCE IN HERITAGE ASSETS – HISTORIC ENGLAND ADVICE NOTE 12

This Historic England advice note covers the NPPF requirement for applicants for heritage and other consents to describe heritage significance to help local planning authorities to make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets. It explores the assessment of significance of heritage assets as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal(s).

3.0 SITE & CONTEXT

3.1 This Heritage Statement is submitted in support of 2 no. applications relating to the following sites:

- Units G34 - G46 which comprise of a run of eight 'inset' retail units located on the southern elevation of Middleton Shopping Centre ('the Shopping Centre') and facing towards the town's central bus station. These units are all vacant (with the exception of one unit) and have not been refurbished for several years (see Photo 1, Table 3.1 below).
- An area of hardstanding / tarmac which connects the Shopping Centre to the town's bus station to the south – this area is currently used by pedestrians only with vehicular access restricted by way of a series of permanent bollards interspersed unattractive with temporary barriers. This area could be described as somewhat stark in appearance and is very much underutilised (see Photos 2 3, & 4, Table 3.1 below)

3.2 Both sites are located to the south of Middleton Shopping Centre and of relevance in the context of this Statement, adjacent to the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area (this being located to the north and east of the application sites) (see Figure 3.1).

3.3 Notwithstanding this adjacency, it should be noted that none of the views identified as being important within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (dated October 2008), including those to and from Middleton Gardens) will be affected by the proposals. On the contrary, views of the site to and from the Conservation Area are very much limited as demonstrated by the schedule of viewpoints below (Table 3.1, Figure 3.2). As a result, the potential for the proposal to have a negative impact on the Conservation Area's heritage significance is considered to be extremely limited.

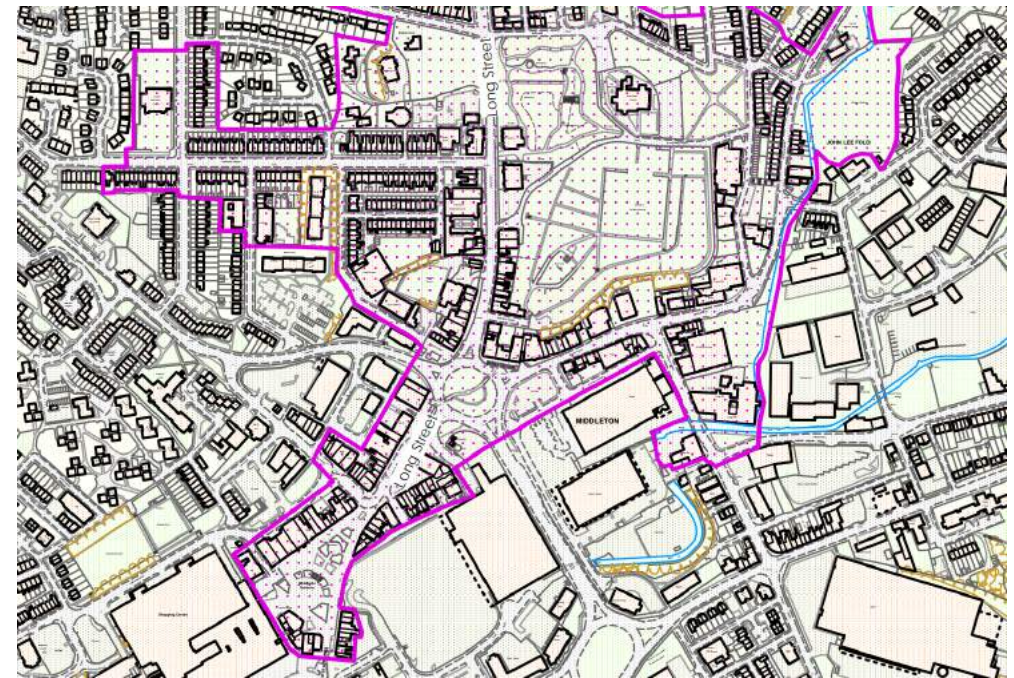


Figure 3.1: Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area (Map Extract)
Source: Rochdale MBC

PHOTO

DESCRIPTION / COMMENTARY

1



Units G34 – G46 looking eastward towards the Conservation Area. Photograph depicts poor state of repair of the shopfronts and the overhead canopy.

2



Looking north eastward across the area of tarmac to be given over to proposed parking bays and associated placemaking paraphernalia. As can be seen, this area is currently stark in appearance and does not lend anything to the attractiveness of the area.

PHOTO

DESCRIPTION / COMMENTARY

3



View from bus station looking north towards Conservation Area and the passageway linking the sites with the main entrance to the Shopping Centre.

4



View from site's junction with Manchester New Road towards the south eastern corner of the Shopping Centre and the passageway linking the sites with the main entrance to the Shopping Centre. The temporary barriers in particular are somewhat unattractive.

PHOTO	DESCRIPTION / COMMNTARY
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View of sites and bus station from edge of Conservation Area between Colmar House and Middleton Fish Bar. Pedestrianised area of Manchester New Road behind.

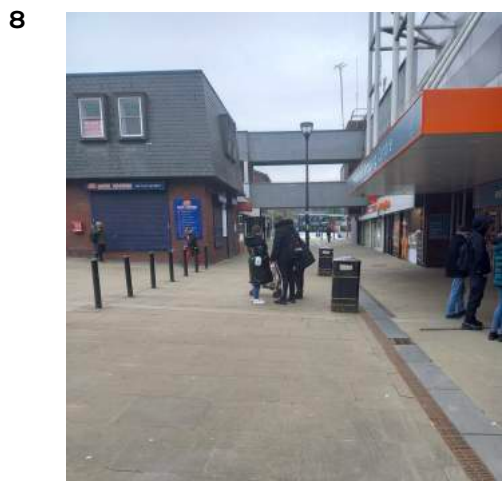


View from Middleton Gardens looking in the general direction of the application sites. As can be seen, any view of the sites is obstructed by Colmar House and Suffield House.

PHOTO	DESCRIPTION / COMMNTARY
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View towards sites from passageway linking sites to main entrance to the Shopping Centre. Land between Shopping Centre (Units G47 and G18) and Suffield House.



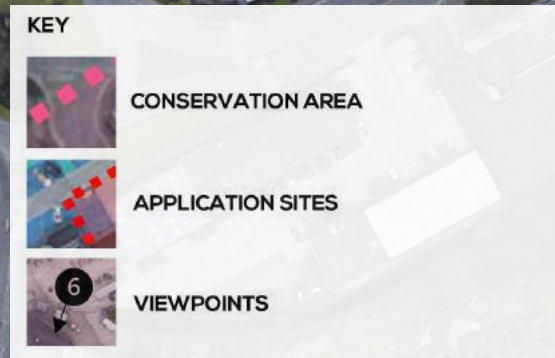
View towards sites from main entrance to the Shopping Centre

PHOTO	DESCRIPTION / COMMNTARY
9	 View of site from land between The Corner Café at Colmar House and Unit G45-46.
10	 View from Wood Street looking in the general direction of the application sites. <i>NB this is a Google Street View image from April 2021.</i>

Table 3.1: Schedule of Viewpoints (see Appendix 1 for Full Size Images)
Source: Ashdown Phillips (Photos Taken 27/04/2023) / Google Street View



Figure 3.2: Viewpoint Locations



4.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 As described above, the sites to which the applications relate are directly adjacent a designated heritage asset, namely the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. No statutorily or locally listed buildings or assets are present on site nor are there any statutorily or locally listed premises that will be affected by the proposals. Indeed, owing to its position to the north east of Colmar House, the sites cannot be seen from the nearest listed premises; the Grade II listed 33, 35 and 37 Middleton Gardens.

PROPOSED WORKS

- 4.2 The proposed works are best described as follows:

- the refurbishment of the shopfronts of Units G34 - G46 (application submitted under Planning Portal Ref: PP-11993776); and
- the introduction of an area of 8 no. short stay parking bays (plus 2 no. disabled parking bays and 10 cycle spaces) and associated works (including the introduction of a new pedestrian crossing, planters and security bollards) (application submitted under Planning Portal Ref: PP-11992543).

- 4.3 The works to refurbish these units alongside the introduction of short stay parking directly adjacent will significantly improve their marketability and indeed represents the best possible chance to turnaround decades of prolific vacancy in this location (which in turn undermines the overall vitality and viability of the Town Centre).
- 4.4 It should be noted that the two applications combined will effectively 'resurrect' a previously approved but now lapsed planning permission which included a proposal for car parking area to front of Units G34 - G46 complete with public realm improvements, landscaping and security bollards and the formation of a new access onto Manchester New Road (Application Ref: 15/00669/FUL). The fundamental difference in this case is that the proposals are paired back (so that they are deliverable from a viability perspective). The bus turning area associated with the bus station is also being retained.
- 4.5 The stark reality is that these units will remain vacant until such time footfall in this area can be improved. In respect of which, our client and its advisors have come to realise that the only way that this can be possibly achieved is through the introduction of short stay parking in this area, supported by the refurbishment of Units G34 - G46. The two proposals go hand in hand as

demand for the units will be limited and refurbishment essentially futile unless footfall / access to this area can be improved.

- 4.6 Briefly therefore, it is our strong view that the proposed area of short stay parking would be positive on a number of levels including that it would facilitate / justify expenditure on the much-needed enhancements to the visual appearance of this part of the Town Centre.

SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSET

- 4.7 A review of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (published in October 2008 by the Middleton Heritage and Conservation Group and supported by Rochdale Council and English Heritage (as was)) confirms that the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area covers approximately sixteen hectares and that it originally focused on the northern part of the Town Centre. This, it is understood, was the focus of pre-industrial Middleton before later developments shifted the centre southwards.
- 4.8 In terms of relevance to the application proposals, it is noted that the Conservation Area was extended in 2009 to include Middleton Gardens. This extension was proposed in the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (Proposed Extension / Area 3) and encompasses part of the retail centre of Middleton including Middleton Gardens and a set of commercial buildings by the architect Edgar Wood. It is noted that this area has become the commercial heart of Middleton having once been the original location of a medieval mill pond and mill.
- 4.9 The Conservation Area Appraisal goes on to note that this area has seen much modern development which has enabled it to become the commercial focus of the town. The dominant space in this area is Middleton Gardens which is surrounded by an eclectic mix of buildings which have varying forms, materials and styles. Because it is enclosed, it takes on a hub atmosphere with the central area being used as a public amenity. A line of trees in front of the buildings on the western boundary of the gardens helps provide a permeable enclosure which has fostered the use of outdoor seating and subsequently has a European feel.
- 4.10 The appraisal briefly refers to the Middleton Shopping Centre (previously the Arndale Centre) but only in the context of Middleton Gardens:

"Middleton Gardens is a large public amenity which forms a natural hub for the community with outlets into the Arndale Centre and Middleton Market. The

central area has recently been redeveloped and is largely open with some recently planted shrubs and trees and is used for leisure and public occasions. The pleasingly eclectic line of properties along the Gardens western boundary is paralleled by a line of trees which offers a permeable boundary, which encourages relevant properties to use the space for open air activities in the Summer”.

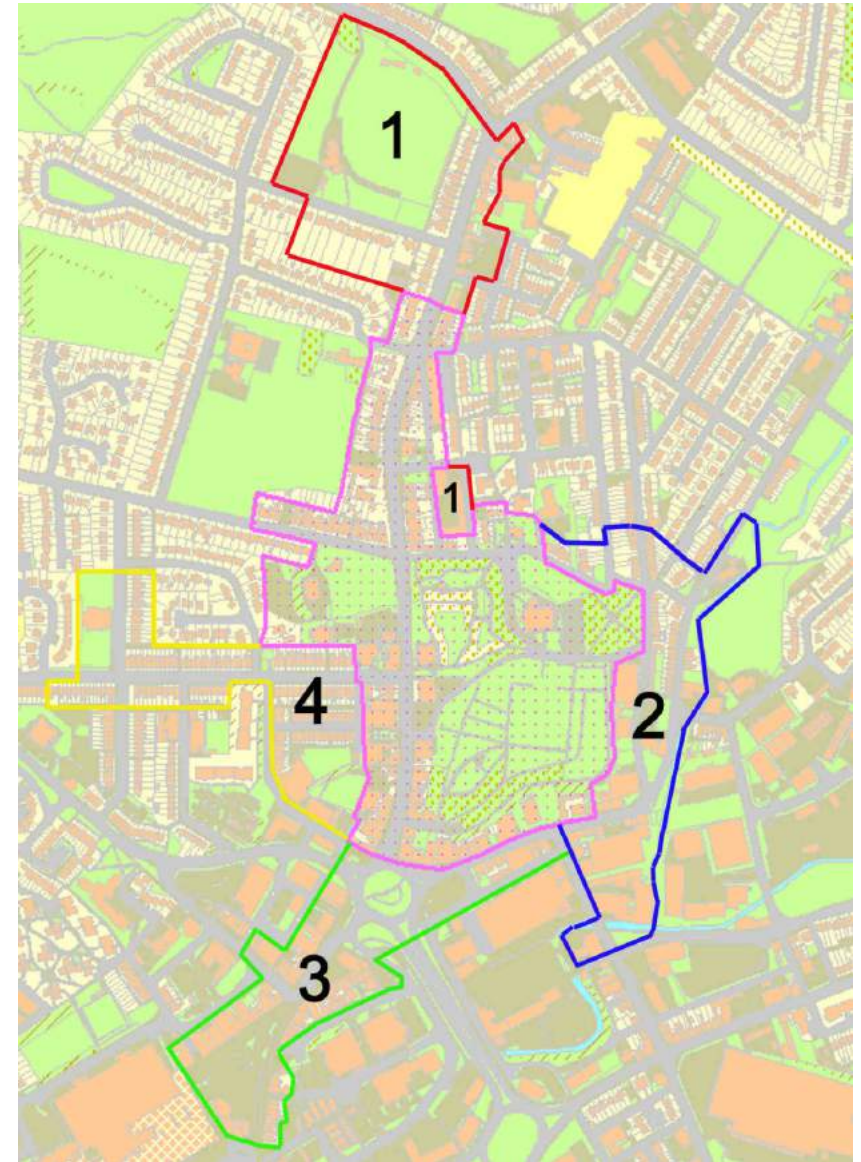


Figure 41: Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area
Source: Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

IMPACT ON HERITAGE ASSET

- 4.11 Accounting for the modest scale of the proposed works to the external elevations, and the highly targeted nature of the works, it is concluded that the potential for impacts beyond the site itself is highly limited.
- 4.12 Moreover the sites are positioned such that alterations in this location will have, at worst, a neutral impact on the adjacent Conservation Area. The views from and into the Conservation Area will not be affected by the proposed works.
- 4.13 If anything, the proposed works will serve to enhance the setting of these assets owing to the refurbishment of the shopfronts and the softening of the appearance of the site through the introduction of planters and the removal of the aforementioned unattractive temporary barriers.
- 4.14 The applications will largely replicate what is in situ at the moment and in terms of colour and design, will be no less inconspicuous than the existing.

IMPACT ON OTHER HERITAGE ASSETS

- 4.15 As highlighted above, no statutorily or locally listed buildings or assets are present on site nor are there any listed premises within such proximity so as to be affected by the proposals.



Figure 4.2: Concrete Planters (Reference Image / Illustrative)
Source: Marshalls / Turner Bates Design & Architecture

APPENDIX 1
KEY VIEWS





MIDDLETON SHOPPING CENTRE

Authorised
vehicles only
No exit from
area except by
control barrier

WIP & COLD
FOOD
The Corner Cafe
EAT IN OR
TAKE AWAY
Quality Food Served All Day Tel 01206 871 680

TO LET
business premises
01206 871 680













