



**GMAAS**  
Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory  
Service  
Environment & Life Sciences  
Room LG20  
Peel Building  
University of Salford  
Salford  
M5 4WX

Ryan Killeen  
Rochdale Borough Council  
Economy Directorate  
Planning and Development  
Number One Riverside  
Smith Street  
Rochdale  
OL16 1XU

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025  
Your Ref: 23/00335/FUL

**Archaeological Consultation, App. 23/00335/FUL: Residential development comprising 20 dwellings (Use Class C3) and an 80-bed care home development (Use Class C2) including car parking, landscaping, open space and other associated works following demolition of Parkfield House – Land at Parkfield House, Manchester Old Road, Middleton, M24 4DY**

Dear Ryan,

Thank you for re-consulting GMAAS on this application. The following reiterates GMAAS' response to the application from May 2023, updated where appropriate to reflect changes in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and updated terminology within guidelines for archaeological projects.

The application is supported by a Heritage Statement (HS) and an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA), each compiled by Nexus Heritage in March 2022 and March 2023 respectively. The documents provide a thorough understanding of the heritage baseline and implications of the proposed development on the significance of the site, supplied against a backdrop of relevant legislative and planning policy background. The documents have each been accessioned to the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (GM HER) as submitted.

Heritage interests at the site are represented both above and below-ground. The extant Parkfield House is a 20<sup>th</sup> century office building constructed in 1965 as the new Town Hall and is regarded by the council as a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA). The building makes an important contribution to local distinctiveness of the area and is located within the Manchester Road Conservation Area. Much of the significance of Parkfield House is related to its association with architects Lyons Israel and Ellis, renowned for favouring modernism as a style, which is represented in this building through the sub-set of Brutalism, characterised by a lack of decoration, stark expression of materials, and large amounts of concrete.

The HS advocates a programme of historic building recording to mitigate the impact of the proposed development, which through demolition would amount to total loss of the NDHA. GMAAS concur with this recommendation, not only as it represents best practice with regard to NPPF 218 and local policy, but also as it aligns with Historic England's recognition of 20<sup>th</sup> century office buildings as a Heritage Asset type, and has the potential to work towards avenues of research in



GMAAS, The University of Salford. Peel Building  
<https://gmaas.salford.ac.uk/> email: [b.j.dyson@salford.ac.uk](mailto:b.j.dyson@salford.ac.uk)



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the North West Historic Environment Research Framework. These include the work needed to establish typologies of modern buildings, to further understand the development of civic or public buildings and their associations with settlement growth and changing demographics across the region.

The Conservation Officer for Rochdale Council may wish to provide further comment regarding the level of mitigation required for the proposed scheme, but GMAAS would wish to see that a historic building survey is compiled to the equivalent of at least a Level 3 survey as described by Historic England. The survey should be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist and should include measured floor plans and phased plans of the building, detailed photographs of elevations, rooms, and features of architectural/archaeological interest, a detailed written description of the historic fabric, history, and comparative analysis, and an assessment of significance of the building and its components. The survey will provide a point-in-time record of the structural layout of the building and will inform the necessity for any watching briefs to be maintained during any soft-strip or demolition works that could expose concealed historic fabric within or on the exterior of the building.

Below ground interests at the site are represented by the former villa known as Park Field House, a large villa which the DBA suggests could have a construction date in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century but is first depicted on the Tithe Map of 1839. Located wholly to the east of the extant office building that replaced it, Park Field House has the potential to shed light on the footprint and chronological development of the building and provides a good target for archaeological evaluation. A large complex of outbuildings to the north and north-east of the main villa also represent targets for evaluation that could shed light on associated practices (domestic, commercial, agricultural, industrial etc.) taking place within the wider grounds. In line with recommendations in the DBA there should be a phase of archaeological evaluation and if significant remains are identified a further phase of more detailed excavation may be warranted. The latter phase may offer a unique opportunity for positive active engagement with local stakeholders via a community led archaeological project. Reports of all works will be prepared and submitted for incorporation with the GM HER, though further methods of dissemination and/or heritage display might also become necessary.

GMAAS recommends that the archaeological works are secured by a condition, worded as follows:

***No soft-strip, alteration, demolition or development works shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works. The works are to be undertaken in accordance with appropriate Project Designs (PDs), submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The PD shall cover the following:***

- 1. Informed by the North West Historic Environment Research Framework, a phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording to include:***
  - i – historic buildings survey of Parkfield House, to Historic England Level 3***
  - ii - informed by the above, archaeological monitoring and recording (watching brief) during any soft-strip or demolition works which have potential to reveal concealed historic fabric that can further enhance the record.***
  - iii – archaeological evaluation trenching across the former Park Field House and outbuildings***
  - iv – informed by the above, a further phase of more detailed excavation (subject of a separate PD).***
- 2. A programme for post investigation assessment to include:***
  - analysis of the site investigation records and finds***
  - production of a final report on the results of the investigations and their significance.***
- 3. Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.***



4. ***Dissemination of the results commensurate with their significance.***
5. ***Provision for archive deposition of the report and records of the site investigation.***
6. ***Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved PD.***

***Reason: In accordance with NPPF Section 16, Paragraph 218 - To record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.***

The work should be undertaken by a suitably experienced and qualified archaeological contractor, funded by the applicant, and in accordance with guidance provided by GMAAS who would also approve the WSIs and monitor the implementation of the works on behalf of Rochdale Council.

Yours sincerely,



**Ben Dyson BA MLitt**

Senior Planning Archaeologist

Tel: ~~0161 295 6917~~ / 07934903149