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Heritage Statement

Proposed Residential Development

at Land both adjacent to Rochdale Road at
Hillbank Street and Church Avenue, Middleton,
M24 2RB.

for Harrison Construction Ltd

September 2024

Land both adjacent to Rochdale Road at Hillbank Street and Church Avenue, Middleton, M24 2RB

'Full Planning Application seeking the construction of 6no. 5-bedroom, 3-storey townhouses with associated landscaping and car parking following demolition of existing garages'

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant, Harrison Construction Ltd, to support a Full Planning Application for 6no. residential dwellings with associated landscaping and car parking, following demolition of existing garages to two plots of land, both of which are situated adjacent to Rochdale Road at Hillbank Street and Church Avenue, Middleton, M24 2RB.

1.2 The proposed description of development is:

'Full Planning Application seeking the construction of 6no. 5-bedroom, 3-storey townhouses with associated landscaping and car parking following demolition of existing garages'

THE PROPOSALS

1.3 The application comprises two plots of land both of which are situated adjacent to Rochdale Road at Hillbank Street and Church Avenue in Middleton. The two plots of land are located on the Middleton/Rochdale border, close to Thornham Cricket Club and the Mercure Norton Grange Hotel, falling within the administrative boundary of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (hereafter referred to as 'the Council').

1.4 The Hillbank Street site (referred to as 'Plot 1') is to the rear of 830 - 832 Rochdale Road and the Church Avenue site (referred to as 'Plot 2') is to the rear of 854 - 864 Rochdale Road. Both plots are approximately 0.3 miles from the Slattocks roundabout/Stakehill Industrial Estate.

CONTEXT

1.5 The site is not located in a Conservation Area, nor does it contain any listed buildings. It is located close to designated heritage assets, St John Thornham Church and War Memorial (both Grade II Listed), which are located approximately 0.2 miles to the east.

1.6 This report has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of Section 16 of the NPPF. It considers the characteristics of the relevant heritage assets and their settings in sufficient detail to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance.

1.7 This Heritage Impact Assessment is structured as follows:

- Statutory requirements of legislation and policy;
- Description of the assets including historic context;
- Assessment of significance;
- An outline of the proposed works; and
- Assessment of impact.

2 LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.1 The application is located close to two designated heritage assets- St John Thornham Church and War Memorial (both Grade II Listed). Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires decision-makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 2.2 Section 72 of the same Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for development can be produced. It is a material consideration in planning decisions and was most recently updated in December 2023.
- 2.4 Section 16 sets out policy requirements in relation to the historic environment. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (para 195). Applicants must describe the significance of affected heritage assets including contribution made by their setting including archaeological interest as necessary (para 200). The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance.
- 2.5 Paragraph 201 then goes on to state Local Planning Authorities should undertake an assessment of 'significance' into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Local authorities should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets; the positive contribution that conservation can make to sustainable communities; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (para 203).
- 2.6 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 whether

harm is substantial or less than substantial (para 205). Any harm requires clear and convincing justification (para 206).

- 2.7 Where development would cause substantial harm/loss of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless the harm/loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or the nature of the asset prevents reasonable use; no viable use can be found through marketing; alternative funding is not possible; and the harm/loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use (para 207).
- 2.8 Any less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (para 208). The effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account, with balanced judgement required as to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (para 209).
- 2.9 Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development in Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets that enhance or better reveal significance. Proposals that preserve elements of setting that make a positive contribution should be treated favourably (para 212).

THE ADOPTED ROCHDALE CORE STRATEGY

- 2.10 The Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy is the lead document in the Local Plan. Policy P2 ('Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage') asserts that the Council will protect and enhance the borough's character and distinctiveness of housing areas and countryside. It sets out the following actions that the Council will undertake in order to protect the Borough's heritage:
- Conserve, enhance and promote both statutory and non-statutory heritage assets;
 - Conserve, enhance and utilise other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration
 - Use 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.

PLACES FOR EVERYONE PLAN (MARCH 2024)

- 2.11 Places for Everyone (hereafter referred to 'PfE') is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth.
- 2.12 Policy JP-P2 ('Heritage') states that development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy.

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

- 2.13 The guidance provides detail on how to understand setting, and how to assess the impact of change upon it. The guidance makes clear that setting in itself is not a heritage asset, rather, it is important insofar as it contributes to the significance of the asset.

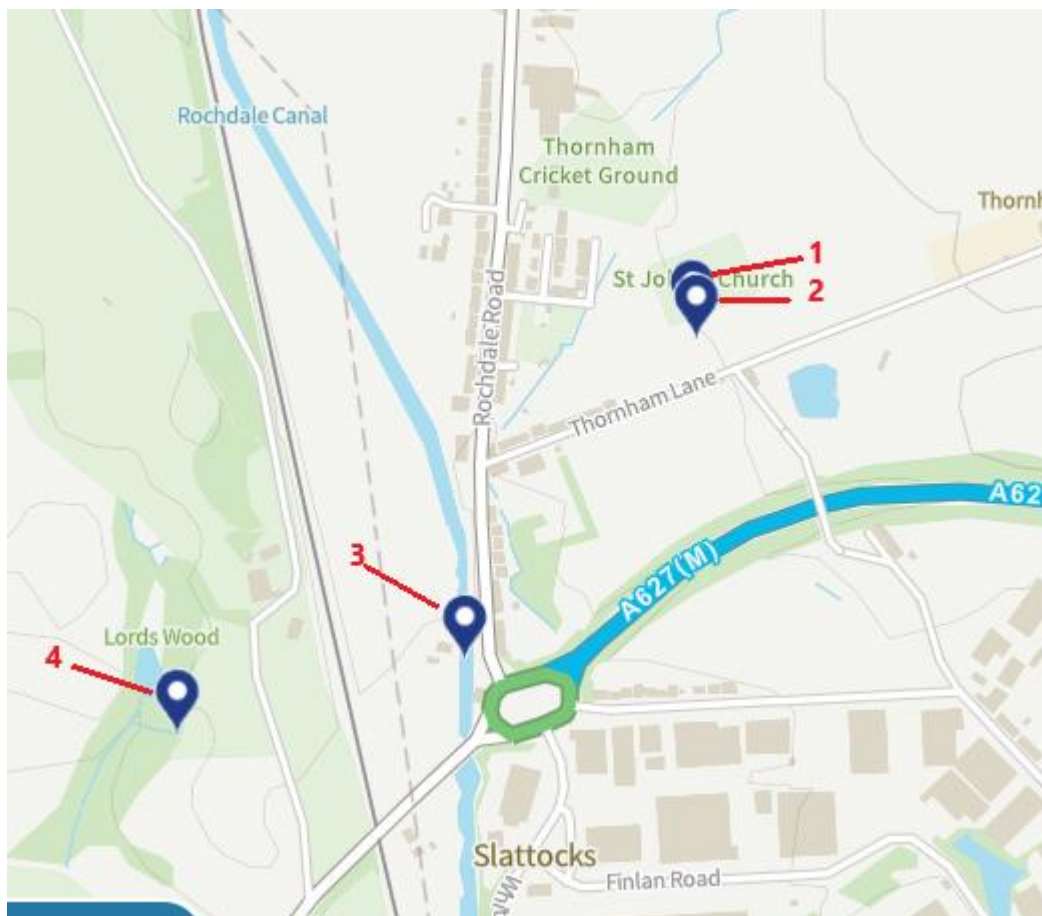
Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidelines, Historic England (2008)

- 2.14 Whilst a draft version of this document has been published for consultation, it has not been further progressed. Both versions promote a very similar approach. The 2008 document sets out four groups of heritage values which may be attached to places, as follows:
- Evidential value – the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity;
 - Historical value – the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life are connected through a place: this may be illustrative (visible links to the past) or associative (through links to particular persons or events);
 - Aesthetic value – the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place (ie architectural and artistic interest); and
 - Communal value – the meanings of a place for the people that relate to it.

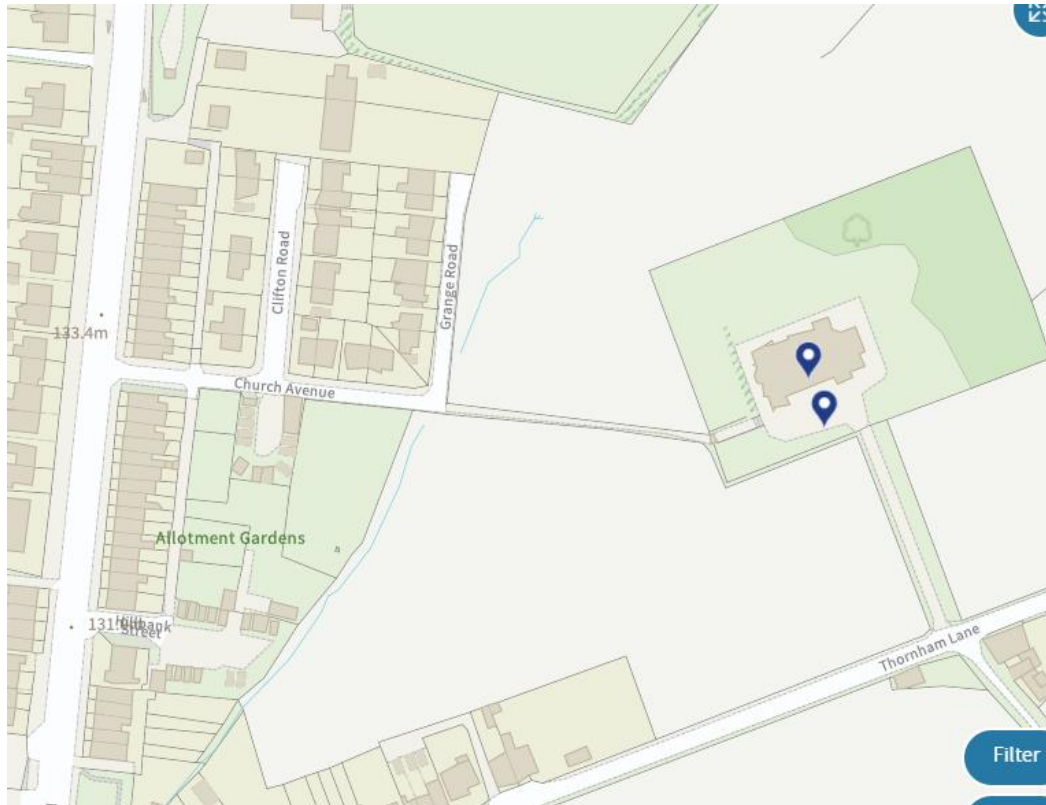
3 IDENTIFICATION OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

3.1 The site does not contain any listed buildings, nor is it within a Conservation Area. It is, however, located close to 4no. designated heritage assets. These are:

- 1- Church of St John- Grade II Listed
- 2- Thornham Parish War- Grade II Listed
- 3- Rochdale Canal Slattocks Top Lock (Number 54) and Adjoining Bridge- Grade II Listed
- 4- Hopwood Hall Icehouse- Grade II Listed



^ Figure 3.1 Listed Buildings (blue pins) near the development sites (marked by blue stars)



^ Figure 3.2: Zoomed in Map of the site showing close proximity to Church of St John and Thornham Parish War

- 3.2 Due to the intervening distance which comprises Rochdale Road that has linear dense built form , there is no visual relationship between the application site and the assets to the south-west (Rochdale Canal Slattocks Top Lock (Number 54) and Adjoining Bridge and Hopwood Hall Icehouse). The Canal Slattocks Top Lock is located on the canal path and has a very limited visual sphere of influence. It has no relationship with the development site.
- 3.3 The listed assets to the east comprise of Church of St John and Thornham Parish War Memorial (both Grade II listed) and are located approximately 0.2 miles from the application site. Given this relatively close proximity, these assets are considered by this report.

DESCRIPTION OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

**Statutory Address: Church of St. John, Church Avenue, Slattocks, Rochdale, M24 2UD
Victorian/Pre-WWI**

Historic England List Entry Reference Number: 1390504

- 3.4 This building is listed under the Planning (Listing Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural historic interest. The Church was completed in 1914 and is one of the last remaining 'gothic style' Churches in North Manchester.
- 3.5 It stands as a church of randomly assorted squared millstone grit, with flush ashlar string courses, window surrounds and mullions. Roofs are pitched Westmorland green slates in diminishing courses with red clay ridges. The church has previously been re-roofed through the joint Historic England / National Lottery Heritage Fund's Repair Grant for Places of Worship scheme, but severe metal corrosion is causing cracking to the stone window surrounds and high-level masonry to fall. A Minor Repair Grant from the Taylor Review Pilot was received in 2019 to help with the roof and rainwater goods.
- 3.6 The Official Entry sets out the following architectural features as possessing architectural merit:

External Features

- Rock-faced snecked sandstone with ashlar dressings
- slate roofs with stone-coped gables and finials
- Perpendicular style with buttresses and diagonal buttresses with set-offs
- Chancel, south vestry, chancel transepts, nave with aisles, west baptistery projection and southwest tower
- East end has 5-light window with a 2-light window to the chancel sides on south over the vestry which has door to south and 3-light window to east
- 3-light windows to transepts with 3-light dormers over in the chancel roof
- 3-light windows to the aisle and flat-arched 3-light windows to the nave clerestory
- 4-light window to west end over the canted baptistery projection which has small single- and 2-light windows
- South west tower of 3 stages with battlemented top
- Door to south, small windows and clockfaces to stage above and then 2-light louvred windows to the bell-chamber

Internal Features

- Chancel has finely carved alabaster reredos and carved wooden choir stalls, communion rails and other fittings.
- Mosaic floor
- Carved stone pulpit and low screen
- Carved wooden screen to south transept, organ to north transept
- Carved eagle lectern. Chancel roof of arched braces rising from stone corbels to collars
- Fine set of stained glass to east and west ends and aisles.
- West end has churchwardens' pews, stalls to baptistery, and plain font with elaborately carved wooden font cover
- Commandments boards above. Nave roof of wall posts rising from stone shafts to moulded wall plates and tie-beam trusses with king and queen posts and curved braces
- The warmth of the sandstone interior together with the rich colour of the roofs and high-quality fittings in wood, stone and glass produce a very harmonious ensemble

- 3.7 The Church is an active place of worship run by The Church of England. Services are provided every Sunday at 10:30am.

Statutory Address: Thornham Parish War Memorial, St John the Evangelist Churchyard, Church Avenue, Slattocks, Rochdale, M24 2UD

List Entry Number: 1452837

- 3.8 This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.
- 3.9 Thornham Parish war memorial was erected in 1921 in homage to the men from the Parish who fell during the First World War. The memorial was paid for by subscription and was erected within the churchyard of the Church of St John the Evangelist (Grade II). Archive photographs show that the dedication ceremony and service was attended by large crowds, and that the mason's name, believed to be Grundy of Middleton, was inscribed into the right-hand corner of a granite curb that retained a gravel bed around the memorial.

- 3.10 Following the Second World War, the date 1939–1945 was added to the base of the pedestal and an 'S' was added to the word 'War' to become 'Wars' in the inscription. The memorial does not record the names of the Fallen. These are recorded on a separate timber Roll of Honour within the church. Sometime during the late C20, the granite curbs and the gravel bed were removed and replaced by a paved podium with block edging.
- 3.11 The war memorial stands within the churchyard of the Church of St John the Evangelist and is situated centrally in relationship to the south elevation of the church. The memorial comprises a plain granite crucifix, surmounted by a wheel cross, with a central laurel wreath carved in relief. The shaft has a stepped base and is mounted on a pedestal with a plain cornice.
- 3.12 Metal lettering on the front panel of the pedestal reads: 'TO THE GLORY OF GOD / AND IN MEMORY OF / THE MEN OF THIS PARISH / WHO DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY / IN THE GREAT WARS / 1914 – 1919'. The remaining panels are plain. The sides of the pedestal are slightly canted and it is mounted on a three-stepped base, the top step has plain chamfered upper edges and the front panel reads: 1939–1945. The granite memorial stands on a slightly raised rectangular paved and clad podium.

4 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.1 As required, this assessment is proportionate to the importance of the designated assets and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal.

Listed Buildings

- 4.2 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold special architectural or historic interest that are, for the time being, included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State under Section 1 of the Planning Act 1990; for the purposes of that Act. The principles of selection for listed buildings are published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport ('DCMS') and supported by Historic England's Listing Selection Guides for each building type.

Setting

- 4.3 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.'

- 4.4 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 states that:

'Setting 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.'

- 4.5 Further guidance on the definition of setting and how it should be considered is presented in the latest National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG') relating to the historic environment. The NPPG asserts 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."

CHURCH OF ST. JOHN

Special Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.6 The property has limited potential for evidential value, in terms of there being limited likelihood of the property yielding any further evidence about past human activity. Illustrative historical value is present, in that it provides a visible link to the past, and aesthetic value in it being a pleasing building.
- 4.7 The significance of the building is principally derived from its architectural merit. The Official List Entry on Historic England is provided at Appendix B.

Contribution of Setting to Significance

- 4.8 There are positive contributors within the setting of the property which may be considered to enhance its significance. These include the Thornham Parish War Memorial which can be viewed within the grounds of the Church and the mature tree planting and hedges around the boundary and within the grounds.
- 4.9 The topography of the surrounding landscape influences how the Church and its setting are experienced. It should be noted that because much of the Church's setting is defined by mature planting, that the way in which it is experienced will vary throughout the seasons and over time. The land between the application site and Church is at a slight incline, therefore this matched with the surrounding mature tree planting and hedges around the boundary create a perception of enclosure.

THORNHAM PARISH WAR MEMORIAL

Special Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.10 Thornham Parish War Memorial was erected in the 20th century. It has historical significance through its illustrative value as a visible link to the past; and associative value as a memorial to the tragic impacts of world events on Thornham Parish, and the sacrifices the Parish made in both world wars.
- 4.11 Given its role as a memorial to local people, there is potential for it to have communal value through local memories and attachments.



^ Figure 4.1: Photo of Thornham Parish War Memorial

Contribution of Setting to Significance

- 4.12 There are positive contributors within the setting of the property which may be considered to enhance its significance. This includes the listed Church of St John which is within the same site. There are neutral contributors in the form of road infrastructure associated with the Church of St John. (See Photo 2 in Appendix A).

5 IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSED WORKS

- 5.1 As set out in more detail elsewhere in this submission, the proposed works comprise the erection of 6no. 5-bedroom, 3-storey townhouses with associated landscaping and car parking following demolition of existing garages.
- 5.2 The site is currently occupied by some garages, some of which are dilapidated and in a state of disrepair as seen by **Figure 5.1** below.



^ Figure 5.1: Photo of one of the dilapidated and unused garages on Church Avenue Plot.

- 5.3 The Hillbank Street site (referred to as 'Plot 1') is to the rear of 830 - 832 Rochdale Road and the Church Avenue site (referred to as 'Plot 2') is to the rear of 854 - 864 Rochdale Road.

IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

Church of St John

- 5.4 The trees along the eastern boundary of Plot 1 are proposed to be retained. In its current form, the top section of the Church (the bellmented top) is visible; however, it is level with the existing tree lines (as seen within Photo 2).
- 5.5 The existing setting of the listed church will be maintained with very modest change in the form of sympathetic housing development. The asset will continue to be viewed and experienced in a setting which is very similar to the current arrangement. The development will have a very limited impact and will cause no harm to the asset or its significance.
- 5.6 From the northern boundary of Plot 2, there is no view of the listed building or monument from this viewpoint (see Photo 6). There is a mature line of trees that sits along the southern boundary of the plot and these trees offer a shield when viewing the heritage asset from within the site.
- 5.7 There is also a hedge running along the eastern boundary of the plot which is particularly relevant as this is the direction in which the assets would be viewed when stood within the development site (See photo 9).
- 5.8 There are a few tall mature trees that stand linear along Church avenue behind, as seen by Photo 7. As a result, the heritage assets are not visible due to the standing of the ture trees (see Photo 8).
- 5.9 Replacement of the garages on plot 2 with dwellinghouses will add a modest amount of built form to an existing cluster of development. As shown in Photo 4, the setting of the church already includes the settlement. It features built form including houses and power lines, set beyond dense planting.
- 5.10 The proposed dwellings will comprise a mix of stone and red brick with slate roof. Th incorporation of stone imitates the materiality of the church, whilst the red brick blends into the existing settlement on Church Avenue.

- 5.11 As such, it is envisaged that the impact of development on both plots on the church would be minimal due to the existing trees, planting and dwelling arrangements on Church Avenue. The existing setting of the listed church will be maintained. It will continue to be viewed and experienced in its current setting. The development will have a very limited impact and will cause no harm to the asset or its significance.

Thornham Parish War Memorial

- 5.12 The Thornham Parish War Memorial is separated from both Plot 1 and 2 by dense, mature planting, an open field and intervening built form including the houses on Church Avenue. There is no perceptible intervisibility with the development site and the Monument. This will not change with the seasonal variations in foliage due to the intervening distances, uneven topography and built form.
- 5.13 The setting of the asset will be maintained. It will continue to be viewed and experienced in the same way as at present. The development will cause no harm to the asset or its significance. (See Photo 7 in Appendix A.)
- 5.14 The new development will sit within the context of existing built form, partially screened by the existing foliage set between the asset and the development.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 It has been demonstrated that the proposals will result in no harm to designated heritage assets or their settings. Due to the position of development alongside the existing built form of the settlement, interspersed by established planting, there will be limited change to the assets' setting as a result of the proposal. Views will be set alongside existing built form. The setting of assets will be subject to very minor change and there will be no impact on significance.
- 6.2 The various assets and their significance will be preserved in line with the legislative requirement and local policies. No harm will be caused. The proposal thereby complies with local and national policy. There are no grounds to refuse consent on the basis of heritage impact.

APPENDIX A: SUPPORTING IMAGES AND PHOTOS

Plot 1 (Hillbank Street)- Photo reference points.

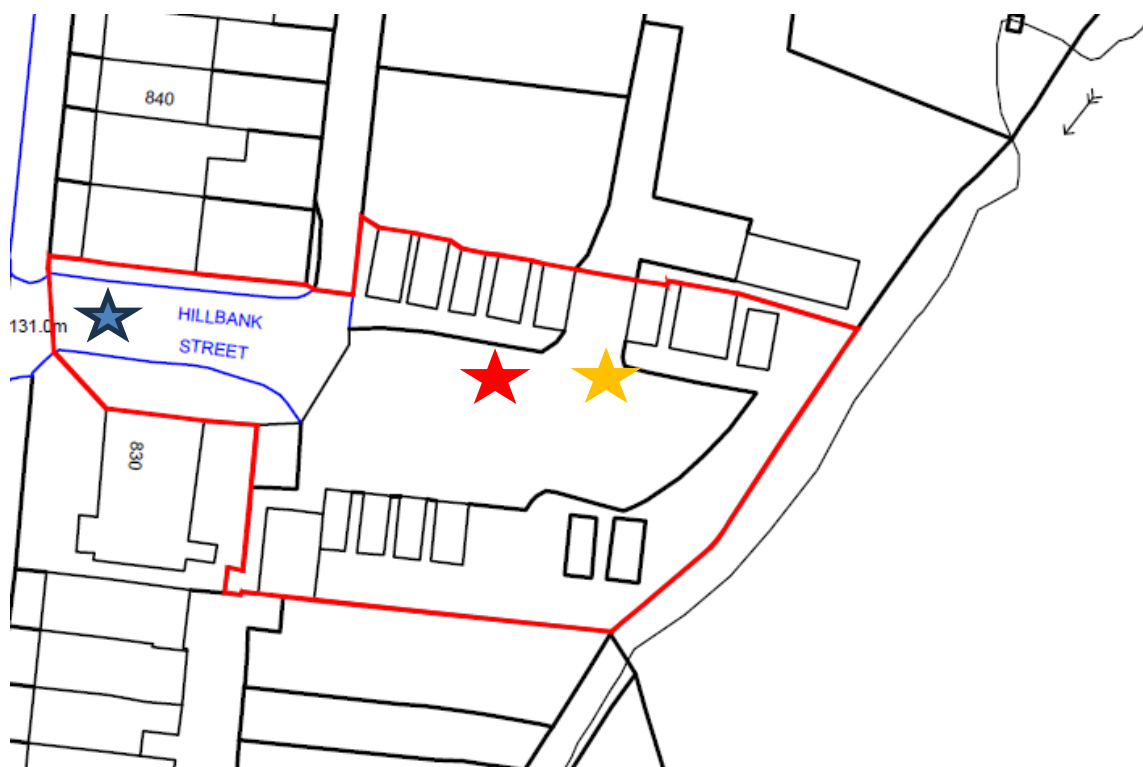


Photo no. 1



Photo taken from dark blue 'x' spot. The Church of St. John is not visible and shield by the large mature trees.

Photo No. 2



Photo taken from yellow star looking north east towards heritage assets. There is one mature tree and other tree planting which partially covers the asset. The top section of the Church (the bellmented top) is visible; however, it is level with the existing tree line.

Photo No. 3



Photo taken from red star looking north east toward heritage assets. The Church of St John is less visible and the bellmounted top cannot be seen. A thin spire is visible.

Photo No.4



Photo taken from the entrance to the grounds of Church of St John.

Photo No. 5



Photo taken from just next to the entrance to Church of St John. It shows the field between the grounds of Church of St John and Plot 1.

CHURCH AVENUE

Allotment Gardens

FB

Photo No. 6



View from the northern boundary of the development site. There is no view of the listed building or listed monument.

Image No. 7



View from the blue star stood closets to the north west corner of the redline boundary, looking east the Church of St. John. The large mature trees block views of the Church. The top of section of the Church (the bellmented top) is visible, however it is level with the existing tree line.

Image No. 8



Photo taken from yellow star looking east towards Heritage assets. Church of St John is not visible and shielded by a large mature tree.

Image no. 9



Image shows the hedge running along the eastern boundary where green arrow is situated.

Image No. 9



Photo taken from red star spot looking east towards Heritage assets. The Church of St John is shielded by large mature tree.

Image No. 10



Photo taken from the green star, looking east towards Heritage assets. The Church of St John is shielded by large mature tree.

Image No. 11



Photo taken within the grounds of Church of St. John looking west.

APPENDIX B: OFFICIAL LIST ENTRY FOR CHURCH OF ST. JOHN (REF. 1390504)

Official list entry

Heritage Category:	Listed Building
Grade:	II
List Entry Number:	1390504
Date first listed:	09-May-2003
List Entry Name:	CHURCH OF ST JOHN
Statutory Address 1:	CHURCH OF ST JOHN, CHURCH AVENUE

Location

Statutory Address: CHURCH OF ST JOHN, CHURCH AVENUE

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: Rochdale (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: SD 88723 08845

Details

335/0/10045 CHURCH AVENUE 09-MAY-03 Slattocks/Thornham Church of St John

II Church. 1907. By RB Preston. Rock-faced sneaked sandstone with ashlar dressings and slate roofs with stone-coped gables and finials. Perpendicular style with buttresses and diagonal buttresses with set-offs. Chancel, south vestry, chancel transepts, nave with aisles, west baptistery projection and south west tower. East end has 5-light window with a 2-light window to the chancel sides on south over the vestry which has door to south and 3-light window to east. 3-light windows to transepts with 3-light dormers over in the chancel roof. 3-light windows to the aisle and flat-arched 3-light windows to the nave clerestory. 4-light window to west end over the canted baptistery projection which has small single- and 2-light windows. South west tower of 3 stages with battlemented top. Door to south, small windows and clockfaces to stage above and then 2-light louvred windows to the bell-chamber. INTERIOR. Chancel has finely carved alabaster reredos and carved wooden choir stalls, communion rails and other fittings. Mosaic floor. Carved stone pulpit and low screen. Carved wooden screen to south transept, organ to north transept. Carved eagle lectern. Chancel roof of arched braces rising from stone corbels to collars. Fine set of stained glass to east and west ends and aisles. West end has churchwardens' pews, stalls to baptistery, and plain font with elaborately carved wooden font cover. Commandments boards above. Nave roof of wall posts rising from stone shafts to moulded wall plates and tie-beam trusses with king and queen posts and curved braces. The warmth of the sandstone interior together with the rich colour of the roofs and high quality fittings in wood, stone and glass produce a very harmonious ensemble. SD8872308844

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: **490404**

Legacy System: **LBS**

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

APPENDIX C: OFFICIAL LIST ENTRY FOR CHURCH OF ST. JOHN (REF. 1390504)