

PROPOSED CONVERSION AT DENEHURST HOUSE

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 40 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as ‘scholarship as its best’ by *Country Life* (June 2003), and ‘well analysed and presented’ in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

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1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works at Denehurst House in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The property is a large 19th century industrialist's villa standing within Denehurst Park, northwest of the town centre. Latterly used as local authority offices, it has been vacant for approximately 15 years. Denehurst House is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale MBC.

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for its conversion to five self-contained apartments along with a ground floor cafe serving visitors to the park and an access ramp. The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the undesignated building. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and assess how the proposal will affect it.

Denehurst House was built for Alderman Robert Turner, founder of Turner Brothers Asbestos Company, between 1893 and 1909 and designed by Rochdale architects Edward Simpson Butterworth and William Henderson Duncan. In 1932 the house and its grounds were donated to the town by Samuel Turner in memory of his father.

The significance of the application property resides in its local architectural and historic interest as an example of a late 19th/ early 20th century industrialist's villa designed in the Arts and Crafts manner by a notable Rochdale architectural practice. This significance is embodied principally in its external envelope, which conveys its architectural and historical qualities and places it within the context of the former estate that has now become a public park. The relationship of the building to its setting is therefore of primary importance. The interior is secondary in comparison, but derives significance from the legibility of the original layout and surviving period features.

Consent was granted in 2019 (planning reference 16/00720/FUL) for a similar scheme for conversion to six flats along with a cafe and access ramp, which confirms the proposal was not considered harmful. The works however were never implemented and consent has now lapsed. The building has now stood vacant for more than 12 years and is in need of a sustainable use. The proposed scheme is beneficial in that it secures this use and involves a series of positive works to arrest the deterioration of the property. The external appearance of the building will remain essentially unchanged, while the interior works are not considered to have an adverse effect,

Where heritage assets are undesignated, national guidance requires simply a balanced planning judgment that weighs the significance of the asset against any harm or loss; the relevant local development plan policy requires the asset's conservation and protection. The proposal as submitted satisfies both these tests as it will result in no adverse effect on the intrinsic architectural or historic interest from which the significance of the undesignated building derives. The proposal will also deliver the important public benefits of putting the building to a sustainable use, increasing the available housing supply and providing an enhancement to the appearance and visitor facilities of Denehurst Park. The proposal therefore merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The application property is Denehurst House, which is located in Denehurst Park in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, Greater Manchester. The property is a large late 19th /early 20th century industrialist's villa, which stands off Edenfield Road, close to the park entrance and around one kilometre northwest of the town centre. Its most recent use was as local authority offices until around 12 years ago, following which it has stood vacant. It is now occupied only on a short-term basis to provide surveillance for the property.



Map 1. Location of the application building



1. Denehurst House, a large industrialist's villa



2. The property stands close to the entrance to Denehurst Park

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

Proposals have been submitted to Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council for conversion of the application property to five self-contained apartments along with a ground floor cafe serving visitors to the park and an access ramp.

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3.2 Designation

Denehurst House is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset by Rochdale MBC.

3.3 Heritage impact

The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the undesignated building.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 194 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised, July 2021) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the particular significance of the heritage asset, including the contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the undesignated building, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal. In accordance with paragraph 194, the level of detail is considered proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, and no more than necessary to understand the impact of the proposal. The report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation submitted in support of the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A summary of the historical background relating to the site (Section 4)
2. A description of the undesignated building (Section 5)
3. A summary of its heritage significance (Section 6)
4. A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 7)
5. Evaluation within this context of the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the undesignated building (Section 8).

4: HISTORICAL SUMMARY

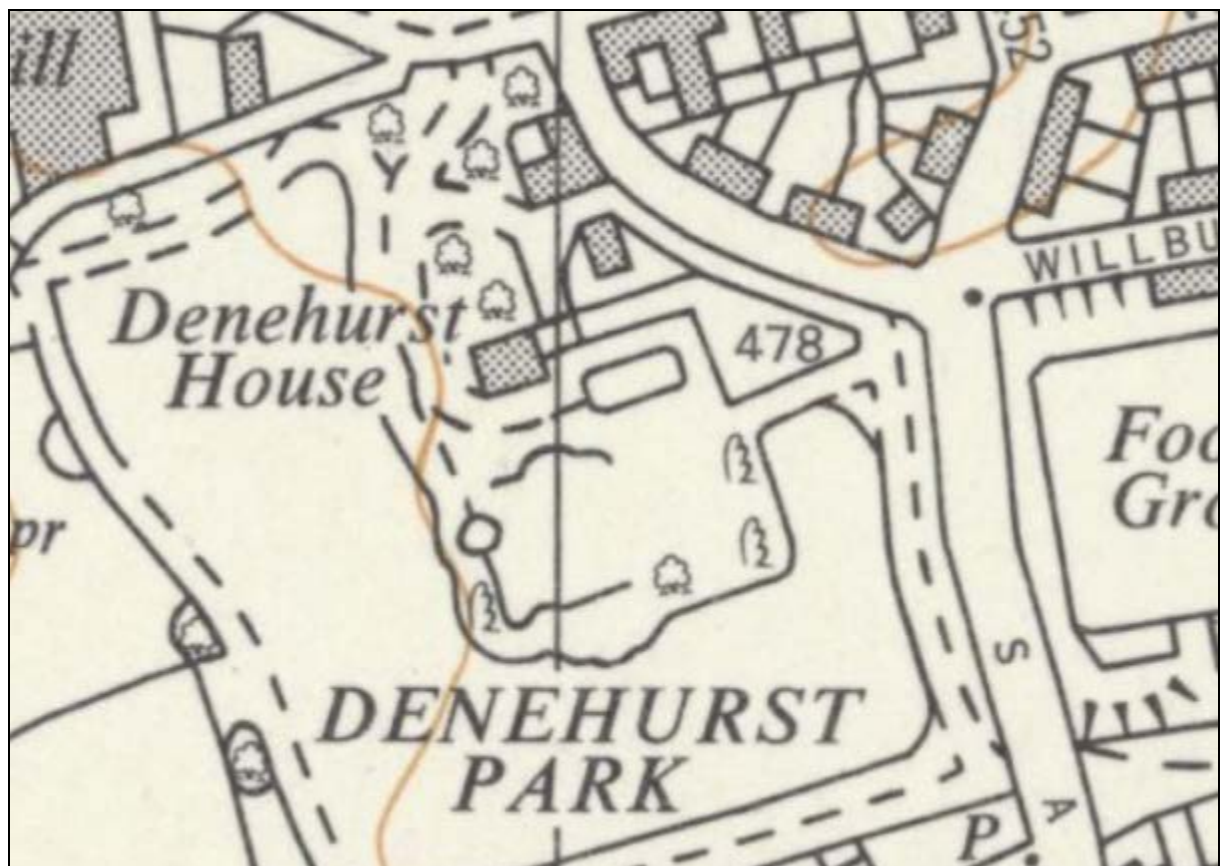
Denehurst House was built for Alderman Robert Turner, founder of Turner Brothers Asbestos Company, between 1893 and 1909 and was designed by Rochdale architects Edward Simpson Butterworth and William Henderson Duncan. The OS map of the latter year (Map 2, following page) shows it was originally set within extensive wooded and landscaped grounds, with a carriage turning circle and an ornamental fountain to the front of the house. To the rear were ancillary buildings including a glasshouse and coach house. In 1932 the house and its grounds were donated to the town by Samuel Turner in memory of his father.



3. *Early 20th century view of Denehurst House*



Map 2. The building in its estate as depicted by the 25-inch OS edition of 1909



Map 4. The edition of 1968 shows the property within its public park setting

5: THE UNDESIGNATED BUILDING

5.1 Overview

Large Arts and Crafts villa in public park setting.

5.2 Exterior

Denehurst is a large detached villa designed in Arts and Crafts manner, characterised by a rich and varied materials palette comprising red brick walls, clay tile roof, tile hanging, stone dressings and gables with decorative plasterwork. The main front is symmetrical with transomed bay windows beneath twin pedimented gables and flanking a segmental-headed recessed porch with balcony above. Decoration is a mixture of Elizabethan and Neoclassical motifs. The west elevation is distinguished by a bay window and stairlight with a boarded-up door beneath, while the east elevation is plainer, with smaller windows and wide multi-flue chimneystack. The rear is irregular with a distinctive oriel with bell-shaped roof and a variety of large transomed windows.



4. The symmetrical front elevation with its twin gables



4. West elevation with tall stairlight and tile hanging



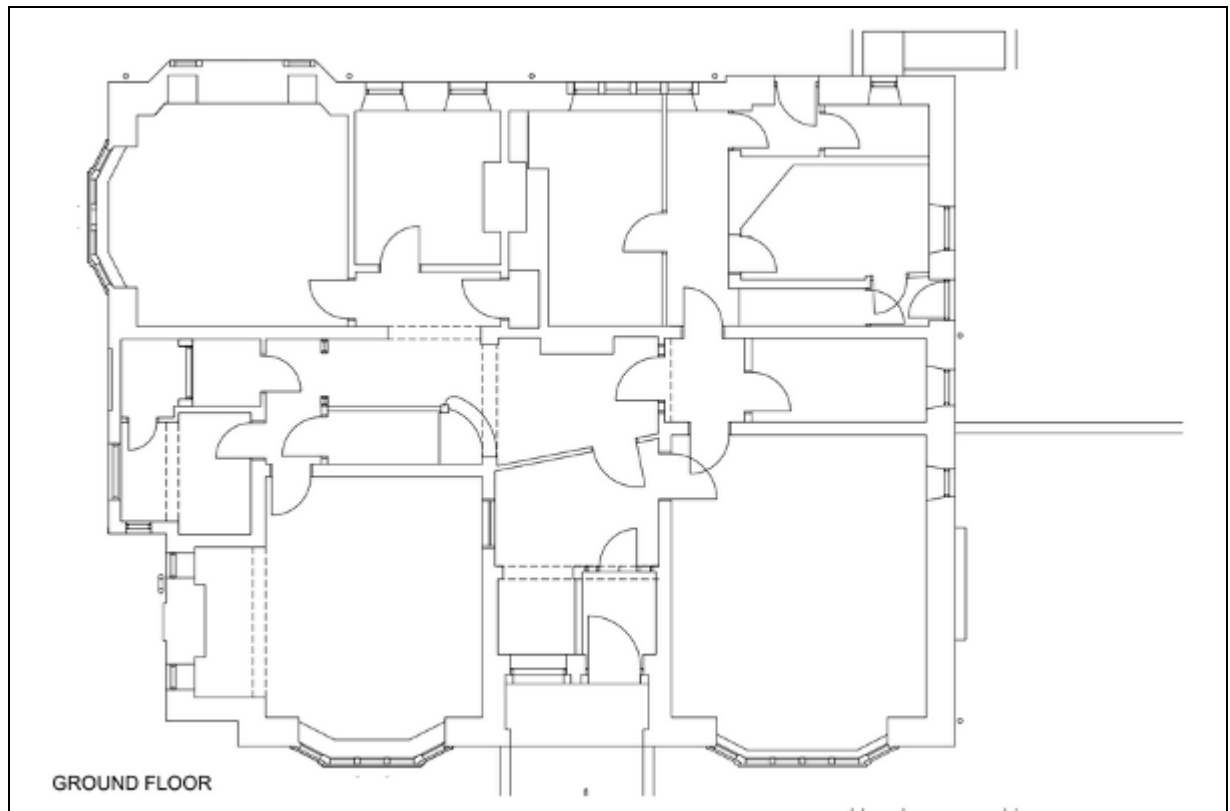
5. The east elevation has a plainer appearance



6. *The rear with its first floor oriel and large transomed windows*

5.3 Interior

The original layout of the building has been subject to some alteration and subdivision but still remains legible, with central entrance hall from which the principal ground floor rooms lead off and the staircase to the west side. Despite alteration, the interior retains much of its original character through surviving details such as plasterwork ceiling and cornices of Elizabethan and Neoclassical style, panelled doors in moulded architraves and a dog-leg main staircase.



7. Ground floor plan as existing



8. The main staircase



9. *Plasterwork is a mixture of Elizabethan and Neoclassical designs*



10. *First floor panelled door and moulded architrave*



11. Stained glass decoration in the stairlight



12. Neoclassical architrave to side entrance lobby

5.4 Setting

The building is prominently located within Denehurst Park, close to its entrance, and hence is the defining element of public views throughout the park. These views place the building in the context of its original estate and convey the inseparable relationship that exists between them. Another key element of the building's setting is its relationship with its ancillary buildings, located within a walled yard to the rear.



13. The building stands predominant in views throughout the park



14. The outbuildings at the rear, which include a former stables and coach house

6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UNLISTED BUILDING

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimize conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary 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.

6.2 Summary

The significance of the application property resides in its architectural and historic interest in the local context as an example of a late 19th/ early 20th century industrialist's villa designed in the Arts and Crafts manner by a notable Rochdale architectural practice. This significance is embodied principally in its external envelope, which conveys its architectural and historical qualities and places it within the context of the former estate that has now become a public park. The relationship of the building to its setting is therefore of primary importance. The interior is secondary in comparison to this, but derives significance from the legibility of the original layout and surviving period features.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how applications affecting the historic environment are to be determined. Paragraph 197 states that 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*

Regarding undesignated heritage assets, paragraph 203 specifically applies:

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications 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.

Locally, Policy P2a (Protecting and Enhancing Character, Landscape and Heritage) of the Rochdale Core Strategy, formally adopted on October 19, 2016, states that key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, will be conserved, enhanced and promoted, including consideration of their wider settings.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Summary of the scheme

To recap, the proposal seeks consent for conversion of the building to five self-contained flats and a ground floor café for users of the park, along with associated internal and external works including an access ramp on the west side.

8.2 Relevant planning history

Consent was granted in 2019 (planning reference 16/00720/FUL) for a similar scheme for conversion to six flats along with a cafe and access ramp. The works however were never implemented and the consent has now lapsed.

8.3 Principle of the scheme

The building has stood vacant for more than 12 years and is in need of a sustainable use. The proposed scheme is beneficial in that it secures this use and involves a series of positive works to arrest the deterioration of the property.

8.4 Effect of the works

- a. External.** The form and appearance of the undesignated building, in which its significance primarily resides, will be essentially unaltered by the proposal. The only changes of any note will be:
 - Replacement of existing windows by flush timber double glazed casements, the framing pattern of which matches the existing. This will preserve the appearance of the undesignated building and hence its significance also
 - Provision of ramp on western elevation together with alteration of existing (currently boarded-up) doorway to provide disabled access. These works will not harm the significance or legibility of the undesignated building and are necessary to enable the proposed change of use.
- b. Internal.** The conversion works require a number of changes to the internal layout, as fully detailed on the submitted drawings. It has been established in this report that the significance of the interior is secondary to that of the external envelope and the unlisted building's presence within its parkland setting. The proposed alterations primarily involve removal of non-original partitions and installation of new ones, with only limited works affecting the historic fabric of the property. No historic details of consequence will be lost and there will be no adverse change to the legibility of the internal layout.

8.5 Concluding statement

Where heritage assets are undesignated, national guidance requires simply a balanced planning judgment that weighs the significance of the asset against any harm or loss; the relevant local development plan policy requires the asset's conservation and protection. The proposal as submitted satisfies both these tests as it will result in no adverse effect on the intrinsic architectural or historic interest from which the significance of the undesignated building derives. The proposal will also deliver the important public benefits of putting the building to a sustainable use, increasing the available housing supply and providing an enhancement to the appearance and visitor facilities of Denehurst Park. The proposal thereby merits approval without delay.