

WeStruct Consulting Engineers



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Heritage Statement

For 134-136 Drake Street Rochdale OL16 1PS

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1. Introduction

This statement accompanies an application for Planning Consent (Proposed flat roof rear dormer for tuition class use. Erection of brick wall at ground floor with fire escape balcony area above. Additional fire exit stairwell at first floor, relocation of previously approved fire escape stairwell. Erection of additional side window to the ground floor, and additional rear windows and door at first and ground floor) at the 134-136 Drake Street a Kurdish Community and Tuition Centre. Full plans have been submitted as part of this application.

Guidance for heritage statements emphasises the need for the documents to be appropriate in length. The nature of the property, which encompasses a number of distinct elements with different features, the extent of the proposed works and the designation and surrounding architectural buildings have driven the length of this document.

The application site relates to 134 -136 Drake Street, a two-storey end-terraced property positioned on the edge of Rochdale town centre and the adjacent but outside of the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area. The building is located close to the Drake Street Tram Stop and towards the corner of the road intersection of Drake Street and Moore St. The site has previously been used as offices and a Doctor's surgery.

The surrounding area consists of a number of properties which have architectural qualities, although the properties Listed closest to the site include 132 Drake Street which is Grade II Listed and the former Congregation Church on Moore Street which is also Grade II Listed. Also, Navigation Inn and 110 Drake Street are Non- Designated Heritage Assets which have recently had conversions.

2. Planning Policy Background

The key theme of delivering sustainable development is at the core of all the policies and objectives in this document. Sustainable development incorporates not only an environmental role (protection of heritage and townscape assets of value), but also a social role (supporting the communities health and social needs) and economic role (contributing to building a strong, competitive and responsive economy by supporting growth and the provision of infrastructure).

There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development that accords with the development plan without delay (where the development plan is up to date) and (where the development plan is silent), granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Policy P2 of the Rochdale Core Strategy sets out that the Council will conserve, enhance and promote key heritage assets, including consideration of their wider settings.

'Significance' with regard to heritage assets is defined by the NPPF 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.'

Planning practice guidance identifies that substantial harm is a high test and may not arise in many cases. Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

When considering potential impacts, the NPPF provides the guidance below-;

205. 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). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

208. 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.

209. 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.

210. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

Policy DM1: General Development Requirements.

This seeks to ensure that new development meets a range of criteria including:

- a) Are of a high quality of design and take the opportunity to enhance the quality of the area
- b) Are compatible with surrounding land uses
- c) Do not adversely affect the amenity of residents through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy
- e) Provide satisfactory vehicle access and parking
- h) Minimise opportunities for crime against people or property

Policy P2: Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage. This seeks to protect and enhance the Borough's character through amongst other things; Conserving and enhancing townscape character and conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets both statutory and non-statutory

3. Listed Status, surrounding buildings and conservation area

Drake Street runs from South Parade / Smith Street in Rochdale Town Centre through the area of interest and right up to the A58 route to the West. Overall, Drake Street Conservation Area is well-recognized and greatly cherished with many buildings of local importance to Rochdale's history and identity. There are high levels of vacancies along Drake Street indicating market failure and some buildings are now in a very poor state of repair, most notably the former Iveson's furniture store and warehouse (on the corner of Drake Street and Nelson Street, further towards central Rochdale, closing in the 1990's), a much loved Rochdale landmark.

Today larger twentieth century buildings intermingle with more modest Regency properties in a traditional street scene. Drake Street was the principal shopping street of Rochdale until the 1980s when shopping developments north of the river led to a dramatic decline in its fortunes. The area has a mixed townscape of variable quality characterised by warehouses, newspaper publishing buildings, a Methodist Central Hall (Champness Hall), various retail shops, including the Rochdale Pioneers' first bespoke Co-operative shop (arguably the first modern Co-operative store in the world) and an early Co-operative Department Store known as 'Fashion Corner'. In between there are gap sites and buildings of poor quality. Overall, Drake Street is well-recognized and greatly cherished with many buildings of local importance to Rochdale's history and identity.



The two listed historic properties are indicated above (blue triangle). Application site indicated by red circle.

132 Drake Street

This building is located at the junction with Moore Street and Drake Street, which is the historical shopping street of Rochdale. The architecture of the building corresponds to the regency style. Constructed with red bricks, the building was built before the 1930's according to Ordnance Survey maps. In 2023 the building had hosted the ADS Alcohol and Drug Service of Rochdale, but in 2024 now lies vacant. Some interesting architectural features contribute to enhance the character of the building such as the wooden frames of the windows.

Listing description

Grade II House, now offices. Early 19th Century. Brick with stone dressings and stone slate roof. Double depth, 2 rooms wide with central entrance and staircase. The 3-bay, 2-storey front elevation has stone sills and cambered brick arches to the sash windows, a stone sill band to the first floor, and open-pedimented door surround with attached Tuscan columns and fanlight, and a wooden modillion eaves cornice.

Sunday School, Moore Street

Moore Street Congregational Church Sunday School was built in 1828 in Rochdale and was a former place of worship. The school was erected during the industrial revolution in order to educate the children, mostly working in factories. The architecture of this school has a Pennine character given by the local stone used to construct the building. Moore Street British School opened in 1834. It was the first school in Rochdale to be opened under the British & Foreign School Society. Its first Superintendent was Mr. Birkby. It was a boys only school, with fees of 2d (less than 1p) per week, and was open to boys over 6 years of age. It operated until the Baillie Street School could be built in 1837. Unlike Moore Street School, Baillie Street had departments for both boys and girls.

Listing Description

Grade II - Independent Sunday School, now chapel. 1829 on datestone. Dressed watershot stone with slate and asphalt roof. Hall with central entrance on Moore Street and a basement. 5-bay single storey; windows have square cut sills, lintels, monolithic jambs and marginal glazing bars. The doorway has a flat hood as does the datestone; gable chimney stacks. Now Al-Abbas Institute.

110-112 Drake Street, Non-Designated Heritage Asset

110-112 Drake Street is three stories high, has a pitched roof, a flat roofed single storey extension is attached to the rear. The external materials are render coloured in yellow sandy. There are currently steps to the front which lead to the single central entrance door of the retail unit. Now the Al-Rayan Supermarket.

4. Proposed development

The proposed development seeks to improve the functionality and ensure the long-term sustainability of the existing building, while sensitively preserving its historic character and architectural significance. A key heritage feature, the traditional shopfront will be fully retained and preserved as part of the scheme. This element contributes meaningfully to the established streetscape and plays a vital role in reinforcing the historic and visual continuity of Drake Street.

As part of the proposal, a loft conversion is planned to accommodate a tuition classroom, supporting the building's ongoing educational and community use. This includes the construction of a modest rear dormer with a flat GRP (Glass Reinforced Plastic) roof and traditionally proportioned windows. Dormers of similar style and massing are already present along Drake Street, establishing a clear precedent and supporting the integration of this addition without harm to the heritage character of the building or wider setting.

A significant amendment from the previous approval involves the relocation of the external fire escape staircase, which was initially sited to exit directly onto Moore Street. Due to concerns regarding pedestrian congestion and safety in this location, the revised design proposes a more appropriate stairwell arrangement. This will ensure safer circulation while retaining clear and legible access points from both the front elevation on Drake Street and the side elevation on Moore Street.

Additional external alterations include the construction of a ground-floor brick wall and the introduction of a fire escape balcony above. A new first-floor fire escape stairwell is also proposed. The scheme also incorporates new openings, including one additional window on the ground-floor side elevation and new windows and a door at the rear on both ground and first floors. These interventions are carefully designed to complement the building's original proportions and materials, ensuring they are visually unobtrusive and sympathetic to the established architectural style.

Internally, several modifications are proposed to optimise space and improve functionality in line with the building's evolving community use. These include the removal of select non-structural partitions to create more open-plan spaces, supported by appropriate structural measures to preserve the building's stability. The internal layout will also be reconfigured to relocate existing WC facilities and provide additional ones to meet contemporary operational needs. These internal works will not affect the external appearance or historic fabric of the property and have been designed to respect the building's heritage value.

In summary, the proposed works represent a well-considered and heritage-sensitive approach that safeguards the historical significance of the property while allowing for its active, sustainable reuse. The alterations are modest, respectful in design, and contribute to the long-term preservation and meaningful use of a locally important historic building.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the proposed development would not detract from the character or appearance of the street scene, the Conservation Area, or the setting of nearby heritage assets and listed buildings. On the contrary, it is considered that bringing the currently unused loft back into a viable and appropriate use. The design and materials ensure that the overall impact on the building's appearance and the character of the area remains neutral. In doing so, the proposal would ultimately support and enhance the significance of the surrounding heritage assets.

The application therefore accords with Policies DM1, P2 and P3 of the adopted Core Strategy, Policy BE/17 of the UDP and the NPPF, in addition to Sections 66 and 72 of the 1990 Act.

6. APPEDIX -A- Similar Developments in the Surrounding Area

1- 181 Drake St, Rochdale OL11 1EF, UK

The new development at 181 Drake Street features both front and rear dormer extensions, each constructed with a flat roof design. The inclusion of these dormers—particularly the rear one demonstrates a precedent for such additions within the local context and suggests that this form of development is generally considered acceptable in the surrounding area.

The presence of a rear dormer at this property indicates that similar proposals are unlikely to pose significant concerns in terms of visual impact or harm to the character of the area, especially when designed sensitively and in proportion with the host building. The use of a flat roof for both dormers further reflects a modern yet practical design approach that aligns with other alterations along the street.

Given that this development has been completed and sits harmoniously within the existing streetscape, it provides a relevant example that supports the case for similar roof extensions elsewhere in the vicinity. It reinforces the view that rear dormers are an established and accepted feature along this part of Drake Street, and do not, in themselves, detract from the architectural integrity or the amenity of the area.



The property 181 Drake St, Rochdale OL11 1EF

2- 195 Drake St, Rochdale OL16 1PJ, UK

The property located at 195 Drake Street, Rochdale, OL16 1PJ, also features both front and rear dormer windows, reflecting a similar development pattern to that seen at other properties along this stretch of Drake Street. These dormers are integrated into the existing roof structure and adopt a flat roof design, which appears to be a recurring feature within the area.

It shows further justification for the acceptability of similar proposals in the immediate area. They highlight how such additions can be successfully incorporated without compromising local character or heritage value, especially when consistent with the scale, materials, and form of nearby structures.



The property 181 Drake St, Rochdale OL11 1EF

3- 201 Drake St, Rochdale OL11 1EF, UK

Similarly, the property at 201 Drake Street has received approval for the addition of both front and rear dormer extensions, each designed with a flat roof. The combined effect of these dormers has created a more rectangular-shaped roof profile, which stands out as a more distinctive and modern intervention compared to the traditional roof forms typically seen along this part of Drake Street.

While the design at No. 201 may be considered more contemporary and somewhat different in appearance from the prevailing character of the surrounding buildings, it is important to note that it still gained planning approval. This suggests a level of flexibility within the local planning context, allowing for carefully considered modern adaptations even where the design introduces new elements to the established streetscape.



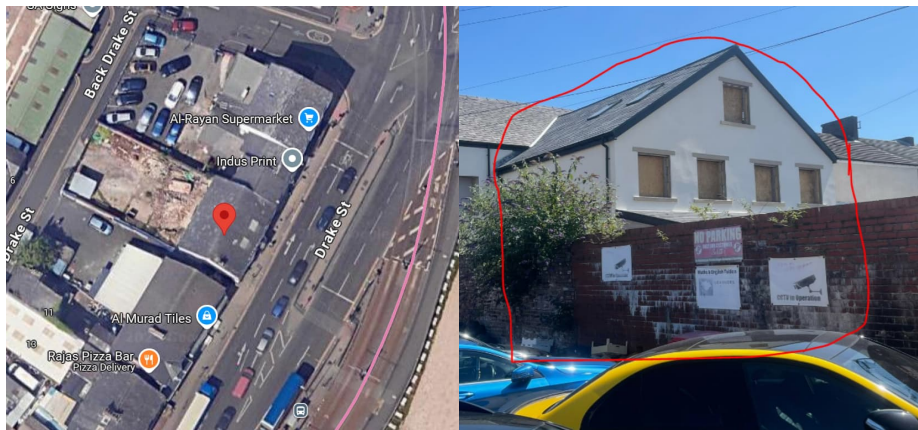
The property 201 Drake St, Rochdale OL11 1EF

4- 27 Drake St, Rochdale OL16 1RX, UK

The new development at 27 Drake Street, Rochdale, OL16 1RX, has recently been granted planning permission for a substantial two-storey rear extension measuring approximately 6 metres in depth. While the proposal has received approval, there are noticeable concerns regarding its visual impact and compatibility with the surrounding built environment.

The extension appears visually dominant and somewhat incongruous when viewed in the context of the neighbouring properties. Its scale and massing do not fully reflect the existing architectural rhythm or the traditional character of the immediate area. In particular, the structure seems bulky and lacks the subtle design cues that typically help new developments blend seamlessly with their surroundings.

Although it meets the technical planning requirements, the extension raises questions about how such developments align with broader heritage and design policies, especially in a location that holds historic and architectural significance. Below is an image illustrating the site and the new development for reference.



The property 27 Drake St, Rochdale OL16 1RX, with 6m Double Storey Extension