



Mr Bob Melling

Rochdale Borough Council Planning
Department
Via email

24 April 2025

Development.management@rochdale.gov.uk

Dear Mr Melling

RE: 24/01003/LBC | Arkholme, 1 Townscroft Avenue, Middleton, M24 5DA (Grade II, *Edgar Wood*, 1901-1905). Reapplication for conversion of garage and replacement of windows, removal of chimney breast/fireplace.

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. Having considered the proposal carefully, we **offer the following comments**.

Built in 1901 by *Edgar Wood*, Arkholme is a Grade II-listed building meaning it is recognised for its national significance and special interest. It was originally designed as a photographic studio for the Jackson photographic business; this is what gives Arkholme its distinctive and important windows. *Wood* was born and raised in Middleton and went on to become what can now be seen as one of the most important architects in the North of England. His modernist designs were in some cases decades ahead of the main fashions of architecture at the time, and Arkholme is perhaps one of his most important. It is an early example of *Wood's* modernism and is perhaps the first of his buildings to use a reinforced concrete flat roof.

The application seeks a reviewed and simplified scheme of works from the original scheme at the start of this year. This proposal entails the conversion of the garage into domestic space, with the replacement of sliding doors with a large timber window. It is also proposed to remove a fireplace of possible mid C20th date and remove a chimney breast of unknown date.

The Replacement Window

The proposed window in the application is of timber frame which is in keeping with the wider building. However, in the proposed elevations the window is shown as not having the important smaller subdivisions present on almost every other window in the house. These smaller lead divisions are an important aspect of the historic character of the property, and every effort

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The Victorian Society

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should be made to ensure this feature is incorporated in the replacement window to maintain this cohesion and character.

Removal of the Chimney Breast

Further to this, the Council would also need to satisfy itself that the extension and chimney breast affected by this application are not original to *Wood's* design and therefore are not integral to the property. However, the Society warns against overdevelopment and the potential harm of needless removal of historic fabric.

The removal of the mid C20th fireplace does not lie within the Society's remit.

The Society urges your authority to request further information before giving approval to this application. I would be grateful if you could inform the Victorian Society of your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

Thomas Ollivier
Northern Conservation Adviser