

Edgar Wood Drinking Fountain Horse Trough, Birch Heritage Statement



JW | Conservation

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August 2022

**Edgar Wood Drinking Fountain Horse Trough
Heritage Statement**

Prepared for Rochdale Borough Council

by

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August 2022

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned from Jenny Wetton Conservation in 2021 by Rochdale Borough Council. Its purpose is to assess the significance of the Grade II drinking fountain and horse trough, which lies within the Birch Conservation Area, and to assess the impact of proposals to move the structure to a new site across the road junction.

Section 3 summarises the history of the listed structure. The drinking fountain and horse trough is dated 1889 and was historically located at a road junction. It was moved in around 1925, probably to its present location, with the removal of the horse trough and any function as a water source.

Section 4 assesses the significance of the structure. The chief aspects of significance are:

- Evidential value of the date and coat of arms.
- Architecture value of design, partially in locally-produced materials, by regionally-important architect, Edgar Wood.
- Historic value as an early commission of Wood's and his second and only surviving example of a drinking fountain.
- Historic association with the locally-significant Birch Mill, further to the north
- Commemorative value of association the completion of a new weaving shed at Messrs. Woods' Birch Mill.
- Regionally-important historical association with the Heywood Old Road.

The drinking fountain and horse trough is considered to be of high significance and to merit its designation as a nationally important heritage asset. There is no significance associated with its present location. Evidence of damage, probably due to vehicle strikes, and poor quality repairs are negatively affecting the significance of the structure. Repair and maintenance and a safer location are needed to ensure the continuation of the special interest of the structure.

The setting is considered to make a positive contribution to the significance of the listed structure, which itself is considered to enhance the significance of the Conservation Area.

Section 5 outlines the heritage planning policy context. The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act is the primary legislative document; there is a presumption in favour of preserving and enhancing heritage assets. The NPPF provides national policy on heritage assets and development and sets out a proportionate approach taking account of significance. The public benefits of a proposal likely to affect the character of a designated asset should be balanced against the harm to heritage assets.

Section 6 provides an assessment of the impact of the proposals. Restoration of the structure was identified in the *Conservation Area Appraisal* as an opportunity for enhancement and as a key project for the area for the local community. It is proposed to move the memorial structure to a new location on the other side of the junction with

Langley Lane. The structure has already been damaged by vehicle strikes due to its location close to the road and a new position could provide it with more protection.

Any structure is most at risk when being moved and it is recommended that **a full condition survey be undertaken by a qualified and experienced historic buildings surveyor**, who should also develop a method statement for the relocation and any recommended repairs and consolidation work.

The site is prominent within the Conservation Area, lies between two terraces designed by Edgar Wood and would provide the structure with more protection from vehicle strikes.

With the mitigation proposed above, it is considered that the proposal will provide an important public benefit.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background to the Report

This report was commissioned from Jenny Wetton Conservation in 2021 by Rochdale Borough Council. Its purpose is to assess the significance of the Grade II drinking fountain and horse trough, which lies within the Birch Conservation Area, and to assess the impact of proposals to move the structure to a new site across the road junction. The NPPF requires significance to be assessed when changes are proposed to heritage assets, and for the impact of proposals to be assessed in relation to significance.

2.2 Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to members of the Edgar Wood Society for their help with the research with this report.

2.3 Purpose of the Report

The report is designed to provide the author's professional opinion of:

- A summary of the history and development of the site.
- An assessment of its significance.
- An assessment of the impact of the proposals.

This report has been written by Jenny Wetton, BA MSc (Arch Cons) IHBC, Consultant based on evidence from documentary sources and a survey of the site.

2.4 Copyright

This report is the copyright of Jenny Wetton Conservation and is for the sole use of the organisations to which it is addressed. This document may not be used or referred to in whole or in part by anyone else without the express agreement of Jenny Wetton. She does not accept liability for any loss or damage arising from any unauthorised use of this report.

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3 HISTORY AND DESIGN

3.1 History of Site

The village of Birch was part of the historic township of Hopwood and developed after the construction of Birch Mill to the north in the early 19th century, particularly along Heywood Old Road. By 1891, the Mill was owned by W.C. Wood and Brothers, who had a further mill in Heywood and an office in Manchester; together both mills had 1,306 looms¹.

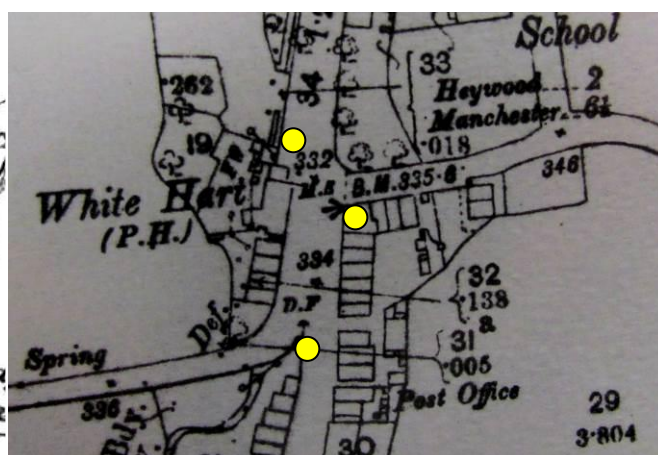
In 1888, W.C. Wood and Brothers commissioned Middleton architect, Edgar Wood, to construct a drinking fountain with horse and dog drinking troughs. This is shown on the 1889 map at the junction of Heywood Old Road and Whittle Lane, marked as 'D.F.'. According to the listing description, the trough was designed to commemorate the completion of a new weaving shed at the Mill and donated to the people of Birch. The *Conservation Area Appraisal*, however, states that a member of the Halsey family, who were related to the Wood family operating the Mill, donated the money for the structure upon visiting the village².

The historic appearance of the drinking fountain can be seen in a historic photograph below, with a rectangular water trough in front of the main part of the sculpture and a lamp on top.

In 1922, the Borough Engineer produced a plan showing a new proposed position for the memorial portion of the fountain without the horse trough, beyond a rectangular building to the north of the White Hart public house. The drinking fountain is not marked on the 1929 map, possibly as it was no longer functioning as such.



1850 OS Showing Approx. Location of Present Site



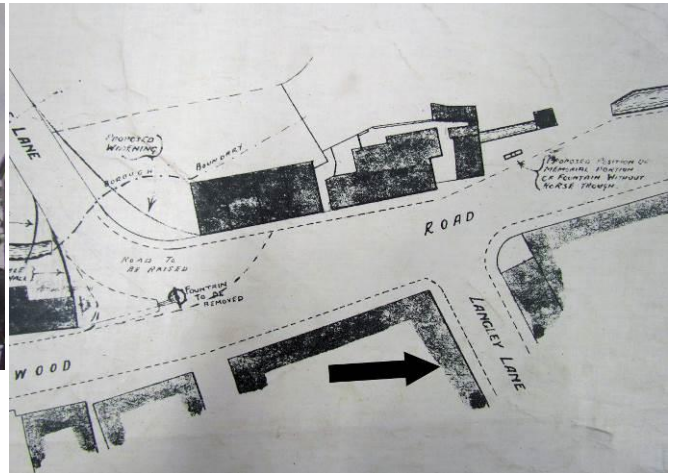
OS 1889 Showing Historic Site of Horse Trough (marked DF), Approx. Locn. of Present Site to North and Proposed Site

¹ W. C. Wood and Brothers [online]. Available at: [https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/W. C. Wood and Brothers](https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/W._C._Wood_and_Brothers) [accessed 22.11.21]

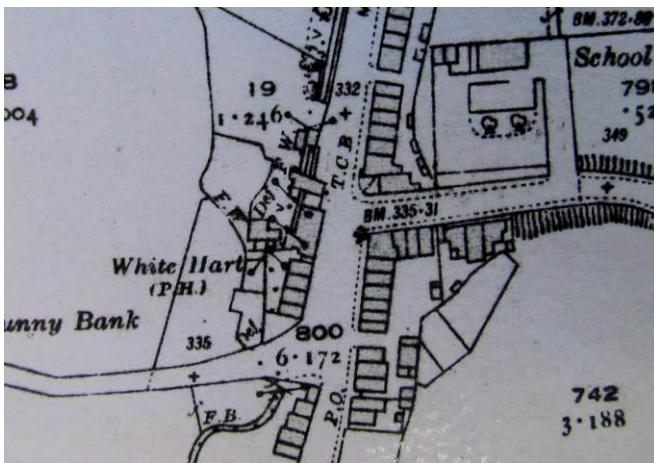
² Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, *Conservation Area Appraisal: Birch Village* [nd], 29



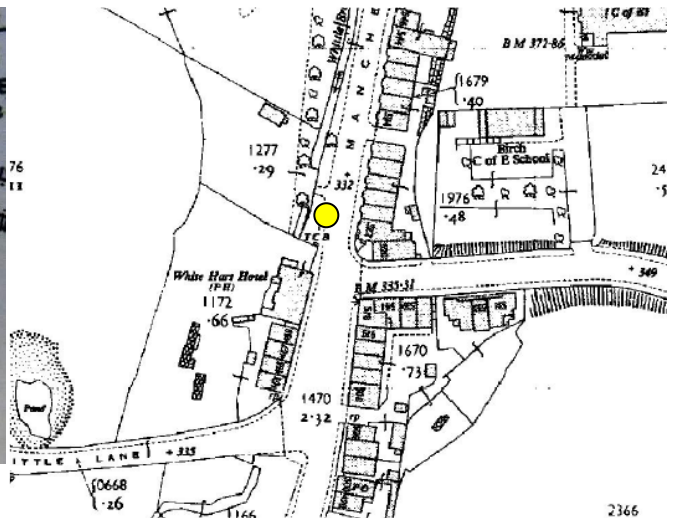
**Drinking Fountain in around 1910
(Middleton Local Studies Library)**



**Plan of Suggested New Position of
Fountain, 1922 (Middleton Local Studies
Library)**



OS 1929



OS 1955-56 Showing Present Location



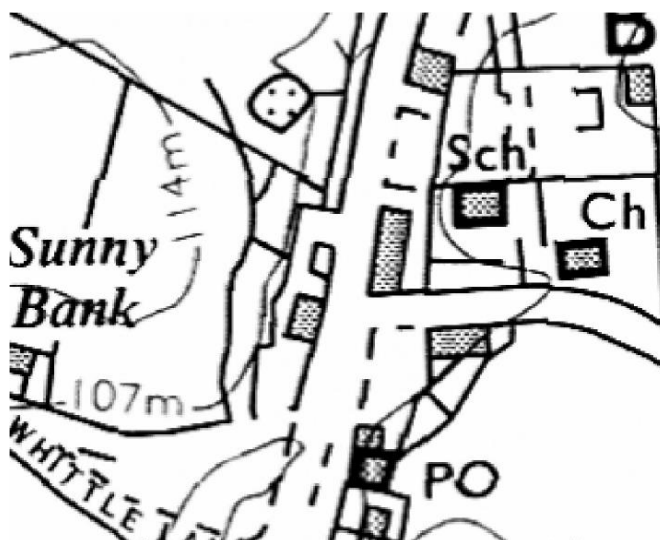
**Drinking Fountain, 1971 (Middleton Local
Studies Library)**



**Drinking Fountain, 1971 (Middleton Local
Studies Library)**



Drinking Fountain, 1971 (Middleton Local Studies Library)



OS 1974-77

The drinking fountain does not appear on any later historic mapping. In 1971, a photographic survey of the drinking fountain was undertaken for the Council.

3.2 Planning History

There are no related planning applications for the structure listed on the Council's website.

3.3 Architectural Assessment

Although the structure is stated in the listing description to be constructed of ashlar gritstone and red brick, there is no evidence of brickwork. The structure consists of a depressed semi-circular moulded arch rising from shallow gabled buttresses. The arch is supported by a square pier, rising from a base stated in the listing description to be red brick but actually appearing to be red sandstone, and which passes through the arch centre, the arch head carrying gablets either side of the pier. The base of the pier appears to retain evidence of an infilled hole, possibly where the water trough was historically fixed. The structure retains a moulded flat cap to the pier, with small dome finials to corners. The listing description states that two stone troughs are located between the central pier and the outer buttresses but the whole appears to be constructed with two large rectangular blocks either side of the pier, capped with coping stones with the arch blocks resting on top.

Near the top of the sculpture is a coat of arms dated 1889 with the initials 'E H' at the top. The *Conservation Area Appraisal* attributes this to the Halsey family who were related to the Wood family operating Birch Mill, and a family member donated the money for the structure upon visiting the village³. However, this is different to sources showing both Halsey family crests and those of Lieut. Colonel Edward Robert Gregge-Hopwood, owner of the Manor of Hopwood at the time of construction.

³ Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, *Conservation Area Appraisal: Birch Village* [nd], 29



Historic Appearance of Structure, ca. 1910



East Face of Structure



Detail of Coat of Arms



East Face of Structure



Base of Pier

3.4 Architectural Context: J. Edgar Wood

Edgar Wood was articled to Mills and Murgatroyd of Manchester, responsible for a number of prominent buildings in Manchester including the London Road Station and the redesigned Royal Exchange. He became an Associate of the RIBA in 1885 and set up his own practice in Middleton where his first public commission was a shelter and drinking fountain (1887); Archer records that this design was illustrated in the *British Architect*⁴. The shelter was moved to the Market Place in around 1925 as part of road improvements but later demolished. In 1889, he designed the Temple Street Chapel, in red brick with decorative banding and gables.



First Shelter and Drinking Fountain in Historic Location in Long Street, ca. 1890



Shelter in New Location, Market Place

By 1892, his practice was flourishing and he moved to the centre of Manchester. Boardman quotes Archer saying of Wood that,

'Architecturally, Wood's sympathy lay with the progressive movement of the day, represented first by William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement.'⁵

Wood was a founder member of the Northern Art Worker's Guild and became Master in 1897. Archer adds,

'In Wood's architecture the influences of both the Arts and Crafts Movement and Art Nouveau are clearly apparent, the former by his revival of the vernacular traditions of Lancashire and West Riding buildings, and the latter by his use of elongated forms and interwoven motifs.'

John H. G. Archer divides Wood's career into 'two broad phases': a first phase of 1887 -1903 and a second of 1903 - c1921. During the first phase, Wood's work ranged from small cottages such as those in Hilton Fold Lane, Middleton; large houses such as Banney Royd at Edgerton, Huddersfield; and six churches. The churches included the First Church of Christ Scientist, on Daisy Bank Road in Manchester, in an obviously Arts and Crafts style. He also designed Rhodes Schools on Broad Street at Rhodes, near

⁴ Archer, John H. G., 'Wood, Edgar (1860–1935)', *Dictionary of National Biography*, 2007 [online]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/61675> [accessed 22.11.21]

⁵ Archer, John H. G., *Edgar Wood – Architect* [online]. Available at: <https://manchesterhistory.net/edgarwood/home.html> [accessed 24.08.21]

Middleton in 1884 (listed Grade II), was built for the Schwabe family of educational reformers. Morris describes the design as:

'...the same soft orange brick as at the Manchester High School but no historicism. The north side has an expressive quality, with four strong brick dormers rising through the roof, framed by a pair of gabled entrance porches with round-headed doors for Boys and Girls.... Such dormers, gables, kneelers and round arches subsequently became an essential part of Wood's architectural vocabulary.⁶

The Long Street Wesleyan Church and Schools (1894) in the centre of Middleton in a more traditional Gothic Revival style was a pinnacle of his career. Morris describes this building:

'The plain and simple mass of the church contrasts with the complexity and richness of the school buildings, combining the characteristics of a formal composition and an organic street scene.'⁷

The second part of Wood's career was much influenced by James Henry Sellers's work and the two men collaborated in an informal partnership, sharing the Manchester office from about 1904. Wood adopted reinforced concrete, a relatively new material in building construction, inspired by Sellers who had experience of flat roofs, which allowed the design of irregular shaped buildings. He used concrete in a series of buildings, the first being a house in Mellalieu Street, Middleton, with a flat roof.

The practice was appointed to design two schools in Middleton, at Elm Street and Durnford Street (listed Grade II). The latter was a large school on a corner site, with Infants', Junior and Senior blocks. Morris describes the Durnford Street design:

'The surviving Infant block is similar to Elm Street School, a hall with clerestory surrounded by flat-roofed classrooms, but the internal aesthetic is even more severe⁸.'

The Junior and Senior blocks were demolished in 2002. Elm Wood School on Elm Street is considered in the listing description to have been

'...designed to established new standards of hygiene in education and was the first municipal school (along with Durnford Street School, q.v.) in Middleton. The building is technically and architecturally advanced, the use of reinforced concrete allowing more freedom of planning.'

Wood's father died in 1909 leaving him an inheritance which meant that he was able to travel more and more responsibility may have fallen on Sellers. Wood and Sellers continued to work together until Wood retired in 1921, his last building being a house in Heywood called Edgecroft.

⁶ Morris, D. 'Here, by experiment': Edgar Wood in Middleton', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 89 (1), September 2012, 135

⁷ Morris, D. 'Here, by experiment': Edgar Wood in Middleton', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 89 (1), September 2012, 142

⁸ Morris, D. 'Here, by experiment': Edgar Wood in Middleton', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 89 (1), September 2012, 151

Although Wood was based in Manchester for over twenty years, most of his work was in nearby towns, such as Rochdale, Oldham and Middleton (where he was born), and in Bramhall and Hale.

The memorial drinking fountain at Birch represents an early commission of Wood's and his second and only surviving example of such a structure.

3.5 Architectural Context: Drinking Fountains and Troughs

The Historic England selection criteria guidance provides useful information on the development of drinking fountains and water troughs⁹.

Drinking fountains

'Moves to supply drinking water in the street began in earnest in the nineteenth century, prompted by the closure of town and village pumps (on sanitary grounds, as it was realised from the 1850s that cholera was a water-borne disease) and an increasing acceptance of the need for public water supply. This development was vigorously supported by the temperance movement which later sought to promote water drinking as a safe and morally preferable form of refreshment....

'Drinking fountains come in a variety of forms, ranging from freestanding to smaller affairs attached to walls. Materials varied too, from polychromatic stone designs to cast iron ones such as the elaborate Coronation Fountain of 1911 at March, Cambridgeshire, produced by the Saracen Foundry of Glasgow. Granite and marble became perhaps the most common materials for later Victorian examples. Decoration and ornament add to their special interest: Victorian standards of applied design could be extremely high, so aesthetic values can be key determinants. Some of these structures were erected as utilitarian forms of memorial carrying biblical or moralising texts and images, which can add greatly to their interest. An association with a noted philanthropist may add significance, as may a proximity to other listed structures. They are amongst the most varied and significant forms of street furniture.'

Drinking troughs

'Special provision also began to be made for cattle, horses and dogs in the nineteenth century. These were often provided by charitable associations....

'Early troughs of iron or wood are particularly rare, and were usually replaced from the 1860s by the more familiar and more enduring granite examples, mainly dating from the late nineteenth century. The better examples are generally listed, with design, inscriptions, earliness and degree of survival being key considerations. It helps if they retain their original position, which early, large-scale Ordnance Survey maps will indicate. Troughs are the most numerous reminders of the now-vanished presence of animals in city life, and in this motorised age they possess an added poignancy as a result. Sometimes they are explicitly sentimental tokens of regard for animals, such as the 1930s example in Chesterton Road, Cambridge, erected by a Siamese prince in tribute to his pet dog.'

⁹ Historic England. *Street Furniture Listing Selection Guide* (December 2017), 10-11

4 SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Assessing significance

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets and is embedded within current government policy; NPPF policies 127 and 128 (CLG, *National Planning Policy Framework*, 2012). A key objective in the NPPF is 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation ...' (NPPF Para. 126). The NPPF advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation (policy 132). English Heritage issued *Conservation Principles* in 2008 to explain its philosophical approach to significance and managing change and identified four main aspects of significance: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. There are three levels of significance as well as neutral and an intrusive grade:

Exceptional Level of Significance

The element is relatively intact, has a special interest, and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the site. This would correspond to an individual grade I or II* listing. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

High Level of Significance

A designated asset important at national and regional level, including Grade II listed buildings. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.

Medium Level of Significance

An undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including locally (non-statutory) listed buildings and buildings which make a positive contribution to a conservation area. The element has been altered, has less special interest, and its contribution to the wider significance of the site is less important. May include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.

Low Level of Significance

An undesignated asset important at a local level. The element has been significantly altered, has a low level of integrity, the special interest has been lost and it makes little contribution to the wider significance of the site. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is more scope for adaptation.

Neutral

The element is historically unimportant but does not have a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area. The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.

Intrusive

The element is historically unimportant and has a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

4.2 Significance of Drinking Fountain and Horse Trough

Following the methodology for assessment of cultural significance set out in the Historic England *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* *Historic England Advice Note 12*, drinking fountain and horse trough can be identified to have the following heritage interest:

Archaeological Interest:

The drinking fountain and horse trough is dated 1889 and was historically located at a road junction. It was moved in around 1925, probably to its present location, with the removal of the horse trough and any function as a water source. The road junction was altered at the same time, with the probable removal of any archaeological remains. There is no historic significance in its present location.

There is an entry for the site in the Historic Environment Record which only repeats the listing description.

Architectural Interest:

The structure retains much of its Gothic revival design by Edgar Wood. The structure retains the decorative memorial arch rising from shallow gabled buttresses, supported by a square pier, rising from a base which appears to be red sandstone. The base of the pier appears to retain evidence of an infilled hole, possibly where the water trough was historically fixed. The arch head retains gablets either side of the pier which itself retains a moulded flat cap to the pier, with small dome finials to corners. Although the listing description states that the structure is partially constructed of brick, there is no evidence of brickwork now. It also states that two stone troughs are located between the central pier and the outer buttresses, whereas the whole appears to be constructed with two large rectangular blocks either side of the pier capped with coping stones with the arch blocks resting on top.

The structure is in a poor condition, has been assessed by the Council and the historic photographs taken in 1971 provide a useful point of reference. The structure has been hit by a vehicle at least once and a moulded stone within the pier has shifted sideways, with one corner of the pier missing on the east face. Both corners of the base on the west face are also missing and poor quality repairs in cement-based mortar have been made, probably contributing to the deterioration of the structure. Repair and maintenance are needed to ensure the continuation of the special interest of the structure.



Damaged Corner of Base



Repair in Cement Mortar

Historic Interest:

The structure has a locally-important historical association with Birch Mill, further north, which is shown on the 1850 map and is still in use.

The structure has commemorative value as it is believed to have commemorated the completion of a new weaving shed at Messrs. Woods' textile factory, and donated to the people of Birch. The structure retains a coat of arms dated 1889 with the initials 'E H' at the top, although sources differ as to whether this refers to the Halsey family, which was related to the Wood family.

The structure also has a regionally-important historical association with the Heywood Old Road, having been historically located at the junction with Whittle Lane.

4.3 Summary of Significance

The chief aspects of significance are:

- Evidential value of the date and coat of arms.
- Architecture value of design, partially in locally-produced materials, by regionally-important architect, Edgar Wood.
- Historic value as an early commission of Wood's and his second and only surviving example of a drinking fountain.
- Historic association with the locally-significant Birch Mill, further to the north
- Commemorative value of association the completion of a new weaving shed at Messrs. Woods' Birch Mill.
- Regionally-important historical association with the Heywood Old Road.

The drinking fountain and horse trough is considered to be of high significance and to merit its designation as a nationally important heritage asset. There is no significance associated with its present location. Evidence of damage, probably due to vehicle strikes, and poor quality repairs are negatively affecting the significance of the structure. Repair and maintenance and a safer location are needed to ensure the continuation of the special interest of the structure.

4.4 Setting and Contribution to Conservation Area

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'.

Historic England's *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (Second Edition) explains:

'Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated.... Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.¹⁰'

Currently located to the north of the White Hart public house and by a small car park, the setting of the structure can be defined as Heywood Old Road in both directions and the western end of Langley Lane at the road junction.

The structure is located on the pavement by the White Hart, with a low timber fence and planted garden behind. Close by to the north is the entrance to a small bitmac-surfaced car park.

There are no other listed buildings or structures in the vicinity, which could have contributed to the setting. Three terraces of houses in the area, also designed by Edgar Wood, are identified in the *Conservation Area Appraisal* as being of local interest and contribute positively to the setting of the Ship Hotel. These are Birch Villas on Langley Lane, dated 1892 and retaining 4-light stone-mullioned windows with canted oriels above on the ends, timber-mullioned windows in between on the ground floor with a canopy and dormers above; Doris Terrace, dated 1893 just north of the junction with Heywood Old Road and retaining rough rendered walls with brick detailing and pointed arched doorways; and Drywood Cottages, dated 1885 and located further north along Heywood Old Road, with similar rendering, stone detailing and prominent gables above the first floor windows. The White Hart, opposite the junction with Langley Lane, is also identified as a building of local interest and a landmark. There is a building on the site shown on the 1850 map, although the front building line appears to be further forward than that shown on the 1889 map and the public house may have been re-built.

Important views identified in the *Conservation Area Appraisal* encompass the listed structure, including those in both directions along Heywood Old Road towards the junction and that looking eastwards up Langley Lane.

The setting is considered to make a positive contribution to the significance of the listed structure, which itself is considered to enhance the significance of the Conservation Area.

¹⁰ Historic England *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (Second Edition), 4



View West Along Langley Lane with Birch Villas on the Left and the White Hart in the Distance



View of Doris Terrace Behind the Listed Structure



View North Along Heywood Old Road with Drywood Cottages on Right



View Towards Listed Structure



View South Along Heywood Old Road



View North Along Heywood Old Road

5 HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

The national legislative framework for development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas is provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; often referred to as the Listed Buildings Act. This sets out the duty on local planning authorities with regard to listed buildings and any buildings or land within a conservation area, when determining applications for planning permission. It is essential that these legal duties are considered, alongside the contents of the NPPF and other planning policies and guidance.

For listed buildings, the planning authority *'shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses'* (section 66).

Listed building consent is required for alterations which are likely to affect the character and special interest (significance) of the building. It is not required for like-for-like repairs, nor for alterations to modern fixtures and fittings which will not affect historic fabric, such as the removal of a modern partition.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in July 2021 replacing all former planning policy statements (previous edition NPPFs). *The Planning Practice Guide: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* should be read in the light of the NPPF and does not comprise policy.

The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government has three interdependent objectives to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The latter objective includes contributing to 'protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.' So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**. Policies 189-208 are related to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

The *Planning Practice Guide* states: 'In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time.'

Policy 193 states: 'Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.'

Policies 194 and 195 of the NPPF require planning applicants and local planning authorities to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be appropriate to the

assets' importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Local planning authorities should take this assessment into account when the potential impact of proposed development to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Policy 196 states: 'Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.'

Policy 197 states: 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

Policy 199 states: '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.'

Policy 200 states: 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Policy 201 states: 'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.'

The *Planning Practice Guide* gives guidance on how to assess if there is substantial harm:

'In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, 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.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm¹¹.'

Policy 202 states; '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.'

Policy 205 states: 'Local planning authorities should require developers 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. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.'

5.2 Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan (2006, extended 2009)

G/BE/1 (PART ONE POLICY) Design Quality

New development (both buildings and their settings) will be required to contribute to the provision of an attractive, safe and accessible built environment, and in particular contribute to the quality of the townscape and landscape, and accord with the best of its surroundings. Developments that engender local distinctiveness will be encouraged.

G/BE/9 (PART ONE POLICY) Conservation of the Built Heritage

Priority will be given to the practical conservation and enhancement of those features of the built environment which are the most valuable, in particular: conservation areas; listed buildings and their settings; scheduled ancient monuments; parks and gardens of special historic interest; and archaeological remains. Such buildings, areas and features of architectural and historic merit will be protected from adverse development

¹¹ Department for Communities & Local Government. *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment: Decision-taking: historic environment* [online]. Available at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/> [accessed 13.05.15]

or demolition and positive measures will be taken or supported, wherever possible, to facilitate their continued upkeep and beneficial use. Particular emphasis will be placed on securing new uses for existing buildings to ensure their future, and on promoting conservation activities which provide a stimulus for the regeneration of town centres, older urban and rural areas, including historic and cultural landscapes.

BE/15 New Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building Development will not be permitted, where through its siting, scale, design or materials, would harm the setting of a listed building.

6 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 The Proposals

Rochdale Borough Council's Property and Highways Services has prepared a design for the relocation of the listed structure.

Taking account of the assessment of significance above and Policies 194 and 195 of the NPPF, the impact of the proposal on the aspects of significance of the designated asset is considered below. The site lies within the Birch Conservation Area and substantial harm should be exceptional. There are further details in the drawings which accompany the application.

6.2 Impact of the Proposed Changes on the Significance of the Listed Structure

It is proposed to move the memorial structure to a new location on the other side of the junction with Langley Lane. The structure has already been damaged by vehicle strikes due to its location close to the road and a new position could provide it with more protection. The structure no longer functions as a water source and there are no proposals to introduce a water function.

However, any structure is most at risk when being moved and measures need to be taken to minimize the risk to listed structure. It is recommended that a full condition survey be undertaken by a qualified and experienced historic buildings surveyor who should also develop a method statement for the relocation and any recommended repairs and consolidation work.

The proposed location will be located at a junction where vehicles have to slow down, will be further away from the road and afforded some protection from the proposed cast-iron railings. There is no significance in the current location of the structure.

With the proposed mitigation above, the impact of the proposal is considered to be beneficial overall.

6.3 Impact of the Proposed Changes on the Significance of the Conservation Area

This analysis is based on the guidance given within the Historic England *Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets*. In Chapter 3 *Addition and Alteration*, and under *General Points*, the guidance states:

'The main issues to consider in proposals for additions to heritage assets, including new development in conservation areas, aside from NPPF requirements such as social and economic activity and sustainability, are proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, durability and adaptability, use, enclosure, relationship with adjacent assets and definition of spaces and streets, alignment, active frontages, permeability and treatment of setting. Replicating a particular style may be less important, though there are circumstances when it may be appropriate. It would not normally be good practice for new work to dominate

the original asset or its setting in either scale, material or as a result of its siting.¹²

The proposed site is on the south side of the junction between Heywood Old Road and Langley Lane and is currently planted with grass, with a services box and access cover.

The site is still prominent within the Conservation Area, lies between two terraces designed by Edgar Wood and would provide the structure with more protection from vehicle strikes. The structure would be surrounded with cast-iron railings in a simple design and grass behind.



Proposed Site Plan

¹² Historic England. *Making Changes to Heritage Assets: Historic England Advice Note 2* (Historic England, February 2016), parag. 41



View of Site, Looking South-west

View of Site, Looking North-east

The impact of the proposal is considered to be **beneficial**.

6.4 Overall Impact of Changes

Restoration of the structure was identified in the *Conservation Area Appraisal* as an opportunity for enhancement and as a key project for the area for the local community. While there could be risks during the move, relocation of the structure of the structure would provide it with a safer location. **With the mitigation proposed above, it is considered that the proposal will provide an important public benefit.**

7 CONCLUSION

The information in Sections 3 and 4 of this report provides an assessment of the significance of the listed structure and its contribution to the Conservation Area. The drinking fountain and horse trough is dated 1889 and was historically located at a road junction. It was moved in around 1925, probably to its present location, with the removal of the horse trough and any function as a water source. There is no historic significance in its present location.

The structure retains much of its Gothic revival design by the regionally-significant architect, J. Edgar Wood. The decorative memorial arch rises from shallow gabled buttresses, supported by a square pier, the base of which appears to retain evidence of an infilled hole, possibly where the water trough was historically fixed. The arch head retains gablets either side of the pier which itself retains a moulded flat cap to the pier, with small dome finials to corners.

The listing description is incorrect in that there is no evidence of brickwork now and the structure appears to be constructed with two large rectangular blocks either side of the pier capped with coping stones with the arch blocks resting on top, and with no stone troughs between the central pier and the outer buttresses.

The structure is in a poor condition, having been hit by a vehicle at least once, and a moulded stone within the pier has shifted sideways, with one corner of the pier missing on the east face. Both corners of the base on the west face are also missing and poor quality repairs in cement-based mortar have been made, probably contributing to the deterioration of the structure. **Repair and maintenance and a safer location are needed to ensure the continuation of the special interest of the structure.**

Section 5 sets out the legislative and planning policy framework and gives guidance on the circumstances in which consent may be required. Policy 197 of the NPPF sets out the principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to heritage assets. This should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing significance, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to the establishment of sustainable communities and economic vitality and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

An assessment of the impact of the proposals is set out in Section 6. Restoration of the structure was identified in the *Conservation Area Appraisal* as an opportunity for enhancement and as a key project for the area for the local community. It is proposed to move the memorial structure to a new location on the other side of the junction with Langley Lane. The structure has already been damaged by vehicle strikes due to its location close to the road and a new position could provide it with more protection.

Any structure is most at risk when being moved and it is recommended that a full condition survey be undertaken by a qualified and experienced historic buildings

surveyor who should also develop a method statement for the relocation and any recommended repairs and consolidation work.

The site is prominent within the Conservation Area, lies between two terraces designed by Edgar Wood and would provide the structure with more protection from vehicle strikes.

With the proposed mitigation, the impact of the proposal is considered to be beneficial.

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9 LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Drinking fountain and horse and dog drinking troughs. 1888, relocated late C20. By Edgar Wood, architect for Messrs W.C. Wood and Bros, textile manufacturers. Ashlar gritstone and red brick. Depressed semi-circular arched structure rising from shallow gabled buttresses. The arch is supported by a square pier, rising from a red brick base, and which passes through the arch centre, the arch head carrying gablets either side of the pier. Moulded flat cap to pier, with small dome finials to corners. Located between the central pier and the outer buttresses are two stone troughs. HISTORY: The trough was designed to commemorate the completion of a new weaving shed at Messrs. Woods' textile factory, and donated to the people of Birch. It was relocated and repaired of a site close to its original location following a road widening scheme.

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