

Conservation & Design Team

Economy and Place

Historic Environment Conservation Consultation Response

Application ref: 25/00755/PRA56

Proposal:

Prior approval for the change of use from offices (Class E) to 2 self-contained apartments (Class C3) under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

Site Address: 3 Wood Street, Middleton Rochdale M24 4DH

Date of Response: 22.09.25

Consultation Report

The application property stands within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. The building in question, known as the 'Albion Buildings' is believed to be an early work of renowned local architect Edgar Wood. Whilst the building isn't listed on the National Heritage List for England, it is locally listed as a non-designated heritage asset.

Edgar Wood was a pioneering architect who practised in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He enjoyed an international reputation based upon innovative buildings that anticipated the changes that were to take place in the twentieth century. He was the most experimental Arts and Crafts architect in England and his nearest equivalent in the UK was Charles Rennie Mackintosh of Glasgow. Edgar Wood was an "artist architect" who eschewed large commercial practice and instead concentrated on art, craft and design in the William Morris tradition. His buildings often contained furniture, art and glass designed or made by him or his contemporaries.

On the basis of the above, special attention must be made to the preservation of historic fabric within the building and to its external appearance and design detailing.

There are two principal concerns with the proposals as submitted:

- The subdivision of the second floor to create three bedrooms would result in internal partition walls being erected up the existing window framework. This would be unacceptable on the basis that the visual appearance of the building as a whole would be significantly negatively affected, especially during the hours of darkness as different parts of the same window bank would be separately lit. Similarly, potential differences in curtains and blinds would undermine the cohesive

appearance of the building in daytime hours. It must be noted that the building is a key unlisted building in a prominent location within the conservation area and commercial core of the town centre so ensuring an appropriate standard of visual appearance is a key concern. The simple solution to address this problem would be to delete Bedroom 2 and extend the size of Bedrooms 1 and 3.

- No details have been provided within the application in relation to the provision of a residential entrance of a sufficiently high quality design and visual appearance. These details must be secured through condition, along with details of making good the original building fabric.

Conditions

Full details of all external doors, windows and fixtures & fittings must be secured by condition. For the avoidance of doubt, uPVC windows would not be appropriate for the building and any required window replacement must follow the following guidance:

[Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading | Historic England](#)

Other matters

The application offers a good opportunity to significantly enhance the appearance of the building as a whole, including the removal of redundant signage, alongside general repairs and maintenance. For example, the broken rainwater goods appear to be causing significant damage to the building's Factory Street elevation. Similarly, several architectural elements of the building appear to be in need of deep cleaning or redecoration. Further guidance can be provided by the Council's Conservation and Design Team if required.

Please make the applicant aware of the following guidance document published by Historic England:

[Heritage Works for Housing](#)