

Built Heritage Statement

Middleton Cricket Club, Towncroft Avenue, Manchester, M24 5DA

On behalf of Perry Williams Ltd.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group have been commissioned by Perry Williams Ltd, on behalf of United Living Connected, to prepare a Built Heritage Statement to consider the proposed installation of telecommunications equipment at Middleton Cricket Club, Towncroft Avenue, Manchester, as shown on the Site Location Plan provided at Plate 1.

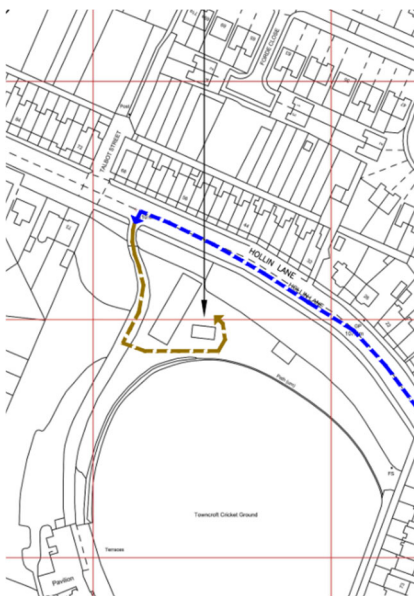


Plate 1: Site Location Plan.

- 1.2. The application Site forms part of the grounds at Middleton Cricket Club to the south of Hollin Lane in a predominantly residential area.
- 1.3. The Site is located within Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area, which contains several Grade II Listed Buildings, the nearest of which, Nos 51 and 53 Rochdale Road (NHLE 1356254) is located c170 metres south of the Site.
- 1.4. Prior Approval is sought for the installation of telecommunications equipment, including a 25m telecommunications 'tree' tower and associated equipment.
- 1.5. This Assessment provides information with regards to the significance of the built historic environment to fulfil the requirement given in paragraph 207 of the Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (the *NPPF*) which requires:
- "...an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting".¹***
- 1.6. In order to inform an assessment of the acceptability of the scheme in relation to impacts on the built historic environment, following paragraphs 212 to 216 of the *NPPF*, any harm to the built historic environment resulting from

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* (London, December 2024), para. 207.

the proposed development is also described, including impacts on significance through changes to setting.

- 1.7. As required by paragraph 207 of the *NPPF*, the detail and assessment in this Report is considered to be "*proportionate to the assets' importance*".²

² MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 207.

2. Proposed Development

- 2.1. Prior Approval is sought for the installation of a 25m FLI 'pine tree' tower, a form of telecommunications tower designed to replica the form and appearance of a pine tree – see Plate 2. This type of telecommunications tower has been specifically chosen in order to blend in with existing mature vegetation adjacent to the Site and reduce potential visual impacts.
- 2.2. The tower and associated ancillary equipment (including ground mounted equipment cabinets), would be situated within a new 8m x 8m compound, bound by a 1.8m palisade fence.
- 2.3. The proposals are detailed on the following plans which form the application package and which this assessment considers:
 - Site Location Map Drawing No. 100 Rev C
 - Existing Site Plan Drawing No. 200 Rev B
 - Proposed Site Plan Drawing No. 201 Rev D
 - Existing Elevation Drawing No. 300 Rev B
 - Proposed Elevation Drawing No. 301 Rev E
- 2.4. **Section 7** of this Report presents an analysis of the impact of the proposed development on identified heritage assets discussed in **Section 6**.



Plate 2: Example of a FLI pine 'tree' tower – for illustrative purposes only.

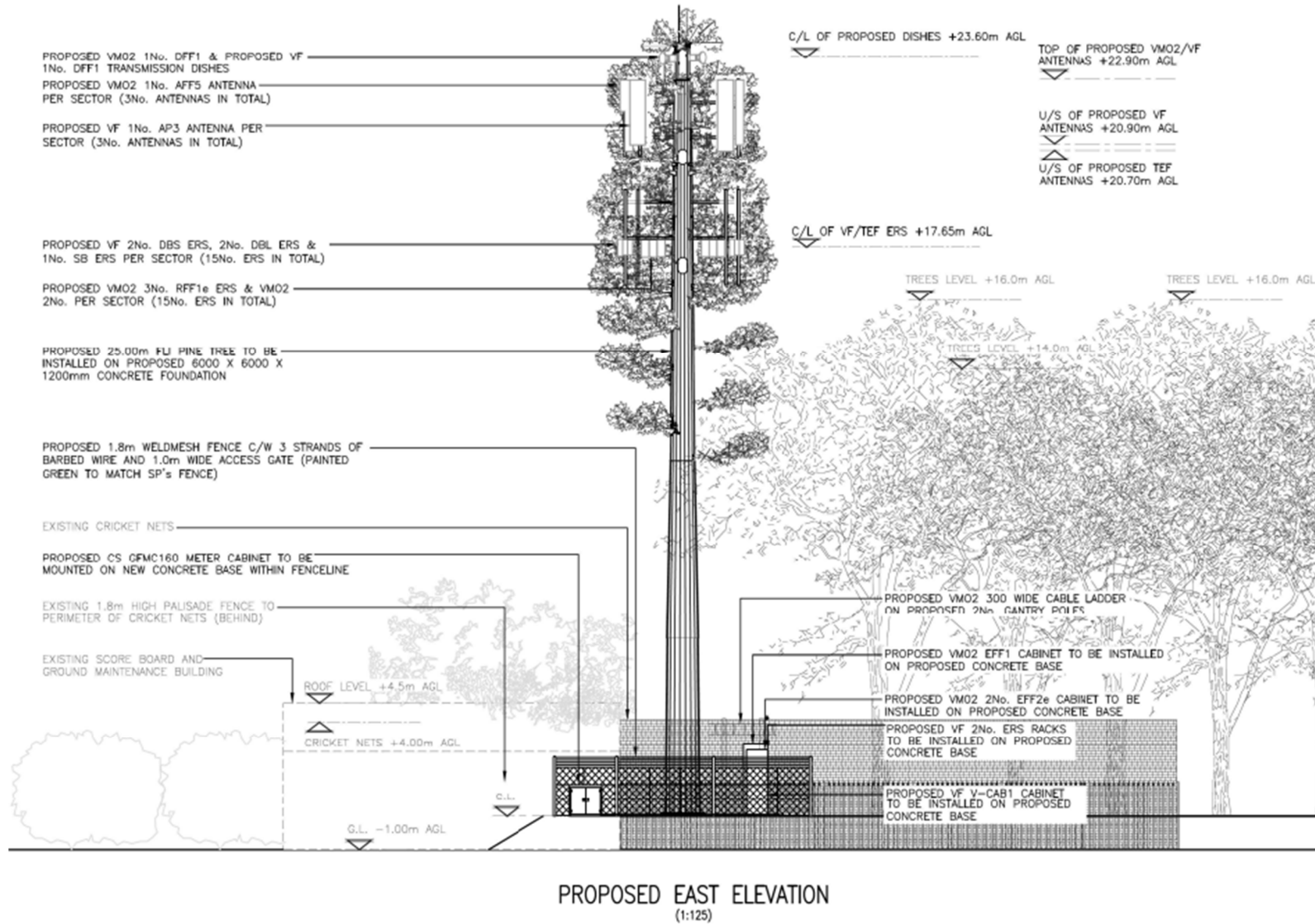


Plate 3: Proposed Elevation Plan.

3. Methodology

- 3.1. The aims of this Report are to assess the significance of the heritage resource within the Site/study area, to assess any contribution that the Site makes to the heritage significance of the identified heritage assets, and to identify any harm or benefit to them which may result from the implementation of the development proposals, along with the level of any harm caused, if relevant.

- 3.2. This assessment considers built heritage only.

Sources

- 3.3. The following key sources have been consulted as part of this assessment:
- The Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER), accessed via Heritage Gateway, for information on the recorded heritage resource in the vicinity of the site;
 - The National Heritage List for England for information on designated heritage assets;
 - Historic maps available online;
 - Aerial photographs available online via Historic England's Aerial Photo Explorer; and
 - Google Earth satellite imagery.

Site Visit

- 3.4. A site visit was undertaken by a Heritage Consultant from Pegasus Group on 7th July 2025, during which the Site and its surrounds were assessed.

Photographs

- 3.5. Photographs included in the body text of this Report are for illustrative purposes only to assist in the discussions of heritage assets, their settings, and views, where relevant. Unless explicitly stated, they are not accurate visual representations of the site or development proposals, nor do they conform to any standard or guidance i.e., the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19. However, the photographs included are intended to be an honest representation and are taken without the use of a zoom lens or edited, unless stated in the description or caption.

Assessment Methodology

- 3.6. Full details of the assessment methodology used in the preparation of this Report are provided within **Appendix 1**. However, for clarity, this methodology has been informed by the following:
- *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-*

Taking in the Historic Environment (hereafter GPA:2);³

- *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) – The Setting of Heritage Assets*, the key guidance of assessing setting (hereafter GPA:3);⁴
- *Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition) – Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management* (hereafter HEAN:1).⁵
- *Historic England Advice Note 12 – Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (hereafter HEAN:12);⁶ and
- *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*.⁷

³ Historic England, *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (GPA:2) (2nd edition, Swindon, July 2015).

⁴ Historic England, *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets* (GPA:3) (2nd edition, Swindon, December 2017).

⁵ Historic England, *Historic England Advice Note 1 – Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management* (HEAN:1) (2nd edition, Swindon, February 2019).

⁶ Historic England, *Historic England Advice Note 12 – Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (HEAN:12) (Swindon, October 2019).

⁷ English Heritage, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (London, April 2008).

4. Site Description and Planning History

Site Description

- 4.1. The Site comprises an area of scrubland situated within the northern part of the Middleton Cricket Club complex, the wider extent of which includes a cricket pitch, car park, tennis courts, sports pavilion and ancillary structures. The Site lies to the rear (north) of a late 20th-century brick recreational building, and adjacent to cricket nets and ancillary structures at the north boundary of the Cricket Club adjacent to Hollin Lane.
- 4.2. The Middleton Cricket Club complex is surrounded on all sides by residential built form, with the gardens of houses backing onto the grounds along its southeast, and western boundaries. Boundaries are a mix of garden fences and metal railings with tall netting to the eastern boundaries to protect adjacent properties. Thick vegetation and trees around the perimeter of the grounds limit views into the club from the roads to the north and northeast.
- 4.3. The Middleton Cricket Club complex is located in a mostly residential area in the town of Middleton, with more commercial and mixed-used development to the south towards the town centre.



Plate 4: Aerial photograph of the Site (as indicated by the red dot) and its immediate surrounds.



Plate 5: View north-west across the Site, 2024.



Plate 6: View south-east into the Middleton Cricket Club from northern access, July 2025.



Plate 7: Existing built form adjacent to the Site indicated with arrow, July 2025.



Plate 8: View south-east from northern access to Middleton Cricket Club with approximate location of Site indicated with arrow, July 2025.



Plate 9: View north-west from southern boundary of the Cricket Club towards Site indicated with arrow, July 2025.



Plate 10: Zoomed in view for illustrative purposes of 10m high lattice posts and netting to rear of Rochdale Road properties, July 2025.

Site Development / Map Regression

- 4.4. The 1839 Tithe Map for the Parish of Middleton (not reproduced) shows the Site as forming part of a triangular parcel of 'glebe land' called 'Long Croft' owned by Reverend Richard Durnford associated with the Church of St Leonard and occupied by John Haigh. Its name suggests it was in agricultural use. Records show that Reverend Durnford owned large swathes of land around the historic core of Middleton at this date.
- 4.5. Ordnance Survey Mapping from 1848 also shows the Site as part of the triangular field, with a row of small productive gardens bordering Hollin Lane (Plate 11). The surrounding landscape was largely rural in character. To the south-east of the Site, and to the east side of Rochdale Road, are rows of buildings, the plan form of which is largely industrial, including what appear to be weavers' cottages formed around a central courtyard.
- 4.6. The Middleton Cricket Club was established in 1858, with the Middleton Albion reported on the opening of Middleton Cricket Club, stating that a match was played on the 'New Ground at Hollin Lane'.⁸
- 4.7. The first identified source to depict the Middleton Cricket Club is the Ordnance Survey Map of 1894, with the area described as 'Cricket and Football Field'. The depiction of the complex, which had been established on an irregular parcel of land at the junction of Hollin Lane and Rochdale Road (Plate 12), is likely to reflect that of the original club

as established 1858. Thus, it is considered that the Site has formed part of the wider extent of the Middleton Cricket Club complex since its inception but does not appear to have been situated within a principal area.

- 4.8. The row of gardens bordering Hollin Lane is still extant with small buildings located on two of the plots. Further industrial and residential development is shown to the southeast within former fields to the east side of Rochdale Road, which illustrates the growth of industrial Middleton during the 19th century.
- 4.9. The Ordnance Survey of 1910 details the circular pitch of the cricket ground (as established by this date), with the extant pavilion to the southern edge (Plate 11: 1848 Ordnance Survey Plate 11). The Site forms part of the wider extent of the ground, set away from the principal areas. Larger detached and semi-detached residential properties had been constructed to the west side of Rochdale Road by this date, commencing the urbanisation of the area.
- 4.10. Throughout the early 20th century there was significant change in the immediate surrounds of the Site. By 1932, a number of residential properties had been built around the perimeter of the Cricket Club, enclosing the recreational area (Plate 17). Much of the open land around the club had been taken over by allotments and other recreational uses such as playing fields. The Site continued to form part of the wider extent of the cricket ground, set away from its principal areas such as the pitch and the pavilion.

⁸ Middleton Albion 'Opening of the Middleton Cricket Club', Saturday 24th April 1858
<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0003163/18580424/032/0004>



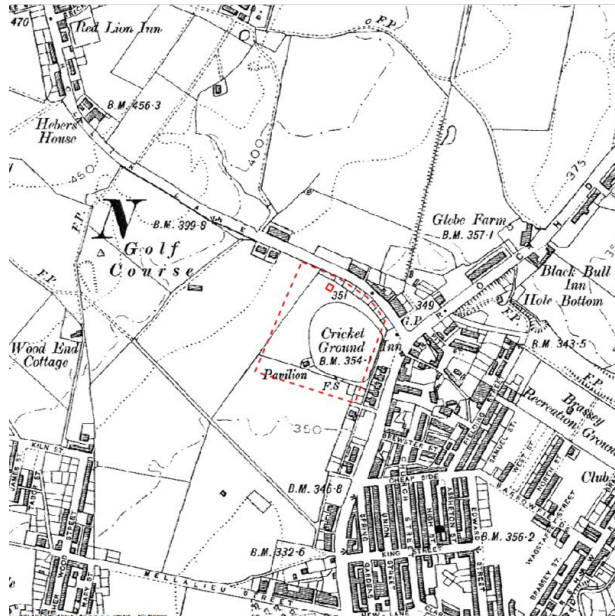


Plate 13: 1910 Ordnance Survey



Plate 14: Aerial photograph taken 1926 looking north with located indicated with arrow (Source: Historic England).



Plate 15: Zoomed view of the Site with located indicated with arrow.

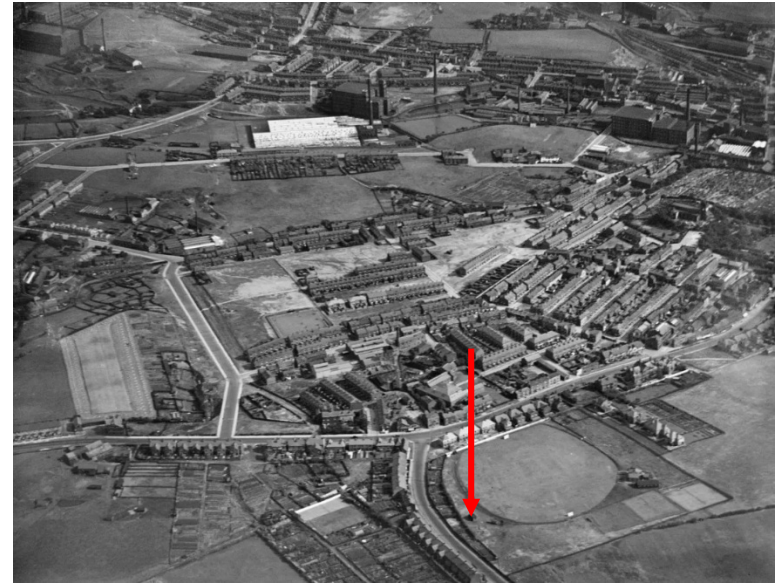


Plate 16: Aerial photograph taken 1926 looking southeast with located indicated with arrow (Source: Historic England).



Plate 17: 1932 Ordnance Survey



Plate 18: 1965 Ordnance Survey

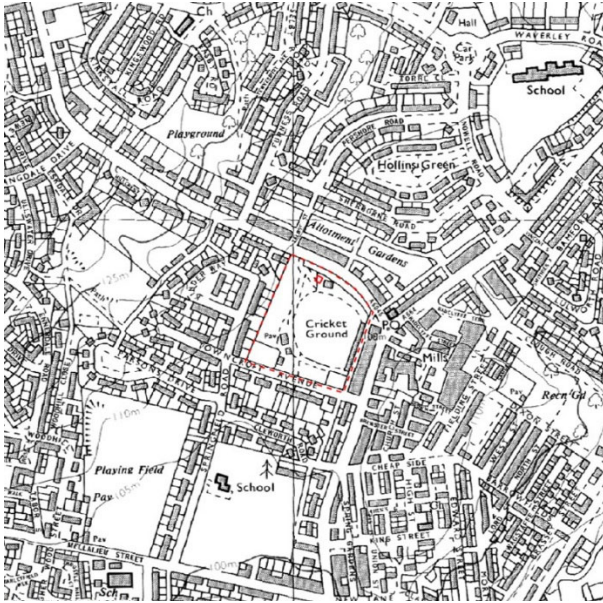


Plate 19: 1984 Ordnance Survey



Plate 20: 2000 satellite image of the Site.

- 4.12. To summarise the Site's development, archival sources demonstrate that:
- The Site was historically located on glebe land associated with the Church of St Leonard and was likely in agricultural use;
 - The surrounds of the Site developed from the late 19th century when several glebe landholdings were transformed into a cricket ground to provide recreational facilities for the growing local population of industrial Middleton; and
 - The current form and character of the Site was established in the 20th-century when the ancillary cricket building was constructed so it is now viewed in the context of modern additions to the cricket grounds, against a backdrop of tall trees to the northern boundary of the grounds.

Planning History

Applications on the Site

- 4.13. Prior notification for 'the installation of new 25m high lattice mast on new root foundation to accommodate 6 no. antennas and ancillary radio equipment and 2 no 0.3m dishes along with 6 no. equipment cabinets in a new fenced compound along with ancillary development thereto' within the Site was 'refused' by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council in December 2024 (LPA Ref. 24/O1035/TELE), with the single reason for refusal reading as follows:

"The site is located within Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area and in close proximity to a number

of Heritage Assets which contribute group value and are dominant features within the townscape. The proposed 25m high monopole by reason of its significant scale, siting and appearance, would fail to sit sympathetically with, and respond positively to, the conservation area and surrounding heritage assets. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to its significance...

In the absence of a comprehensive assessment of alternative sites for the proposed development it is not possible to definitively conclude that there are no more suitable sites reasonably available that would result in a lesser degree of visual harm, and the public benefits of the proposal are not considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm identified. On this basis the application is contrary to Policies P1, P2, P3, and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-S4, JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-C2 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework."

- 4.14. Whilst the Council's position regarding their perception of impact to the Conservation Area is clear within the above, it is not clear from the wording of the reason for refusal what other 'surrounding heritage assets' that the LPA considered were impacted upon by the proposals.
- 4.15. The Officer Report states that the Conservation and Design Officer did not provide comments on the application, and thus the following commentary on heritage matters within the Officer Report is understood to have been prepared by the Case Officer:

"Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special

attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Grade II listed buildings nos 51 and 53 Rochdale Road are situated approx. 177m for the site and grade II listed building Arkholme House is approx. 190m from the proposed site. These buildings are by Edgar Wood are finished in red brick, the proposed mast will be visible from these designated asset (sic)...

Slightly further south lies no 37–39 Rochdale Road, semi detached dwellings designated as grade II listed buildings. Due to the height and scale of the proposed Page 6 of 8 development there will be clear views from this designated asset of the proposed development.

The applicant has failed to consider the impact of the proposal on the setting and significance of the designated heritage asset. Such harm to heritage assets is not considered to be outweighed by the public benefit arising from the proposal.

The impact of the proposed development is a material consideration. Overall the proposed development comprises a wholly inappropriate form of development in a prominent location between heritage assets which will cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets setting and the visual competition within the townscape which it would create contrary to Policy P2 of the adopted Core Strategy, P1E Policy JP–P2 and the NPPF. In accordance with paragraph 206 of the framework,

any harm to the setting of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.”⁹
(our emphasis)

- 4.16. The above is equally unclear as to what heritage assets the LPA considered were impacted upon by the proposed development, as whilst they identify that the proposals would be visible from certain assets, this does not necessarily mean that harm would arise. Furthermore, on site assessment has demonstrated that the potential visual connections between the assets discussed, and introduction of telecommunications equipment within the Site do not appear to be as suggested within the above.
- 4.17. Moreover, ‘setting’ is not an asset or designation in and of itself, with the consideration from a heritage perspective being whether a change to the ‘setting’ of an asset would impact upon its overall heritage significance.
- 4.18. Nonetheless, the heritage assets referred to within the Officer Report are discussed within **Sections 6 and 7** of this Report as deemed necessary, taking into account a detailed understanding of the assets, important elements of their ‘setting’ and the change that would occur from the proposed development.

⁹ 24/O1035/TELE PA PUB Officer’s Report, 5th December 2024

Applications Within the Wider Middleton Cricket Club Complex

- 4.19. Planning Permission was approved in February 2016 for the '*Installation of replacement 10m high ball stop fencing*' (LPA Ref. 15/O1343/FUL).
- 4.20. The proposed fencing was along the eastern boundary of the Cricket Club complex, to the rear of residential properties on Rochdale Road, c120m south-east of the Site.
- 4.21. In determining this application, the LPA's Conservation and Design Officer considered that the view that would be altered by the installation of the proposed fencing – presumed to be that into the Cricket Club complex from Rochdale Road – had 'very little historic significance' and that the public benefit of the fencing greatly outweighed the less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area. The Conservation and Design Officer therefore had no objections to the proposals.

5. Policy Framework

Legislation

- 5.1. Legislation relating to the built historic environment is primarily set out within the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, which provides statutory protection for Listed Buildings and their settings and Conservation Areas.¹⁰
- 5.2. In addition to the statutory obligations set out within the aforementioned Act, Section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* requires that all planning applications, including those for Listed Building Consent, are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.¹¹
- 5.3. Full details of the relevant legislation are provided in **Appendix 2**.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 5.4. National Planning Policy guidance relating to the historic environment is provided within Section 16 of the Government's *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, an updated version of which was published in December 2024. The *NPPF* is also supplemented by the national *Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)* which comprises a full

and consolidated review of planning practice guidance documents to be read alongside the *NPPF* and which contains a section related to the Historic Environment.¹² The PPG also contains the *National Design Guide*.¹³

- 5.5. Full details of the relevant national policy guidance is provided within **Appendix 3**.

The Development Plan

- 5.6. Applications for Planning Permission in Middleton are currently considered against the policy and guidance set out within the Local Development Plan which comprises the following documents:
 - **Rochdale Core Strategy 2016 to 2028** which comprises the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan, Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan and Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan and Policies; and
 - **Places for Everyone Plan 2022 to 2039**
- 5.7. In addition, a number of plans are in progress including the emerging Allocations Development Plan and Places

¹⁰ UK Public General Acts, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

¹¹ UK Public General Acts, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 38(6).

¹² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *Planning Practice Guidance: Historic Environment (PPG)* (revised edition, 14th February 2024), <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>.

¹³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *National Design Guide* (London, January 2021).

for Everyone Plan which attract limited weight in the decision-making process.

- 5.8. Details of the policy specific relevant to the application proposals are provided within **Appendix 4**.

6. The Built Historic Environment

- 6.1. The following Section provides an assessment of elements of the built historic environment that have the potential to be impacted upon by the proposed development.
- 6.2. As set out in **Section 1**, the Site comprises a grassed area to the rear of a modern recreational building within the cricket grounds at Middleton Cricket Club. The Site is situated within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area, and thus this asset will be considered further below.
- 6.3. With regards to other heritage assets within the surrounds of the site, Step 1 of the methodology recommended by GPA3 (see methodology), is to identify which heritage assets might be affected by a proposed development.¹⁴
- 6.4. Development proposals may adversely impact heritage assets where they remove a feature which contributes to the significance of a heritage asset, or where they interfere with an element of a heritage asset's setting which contributes to its significance, such as interrupting a key relationship or a designed view.
- 6.5. It is however widely accepted (paragraph 220 of the NPPF) that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance.¹⁵ In some cases, certain elements of a heritage asset can accommodate substantial changes whilst preserving the significance of the asset.
- 6.6. Significance can be derived from many elements, including the historic fabric of a building or elements of its surrounds.
- 6.7. It has been observed that the following heritage assets have the *potential* to be sensitive to the development proposals and thus these have been taken forward for further assessment below:
- Grade II Listed Building Nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road (NHLE 1356254);
 - Grade II Listed Building Arkholme (NHLE 1391983); and
 - Grade II Listed Hillcrest and Briarhill (37-39 Rochdale Road) (NHLE 1447739)
- 6.8. With regard to other heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site, assessment has concluded that the Site does not form any part of setting that positively contributes to overall heritage significance due the nature of the asset and a lack of visual connections, spatial relationships or historic connections. Accordingly, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in a change that would impact upon the overall heritage significance of these assets. Other built heritage assets have therefore been excluded from further assessment within this Report, including the Grade II Listed Redcroft and Fencegate and adjoining wall (NHLE 1162377) on the basis

¹⁴ Historic England, GPA:3, p. 4.

¹⁵ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 220.

that there is no visual connection, through intervisibility or co-visibility, or historic connection through ownership or function between this asset and the Site. Non-designated heritage assets, as identified by the Local Planning Authority on its website, in the vicinity of the Site and within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area are considered within the context of this designated heritage asset.¹⁶

- 6.9. A map of all designated heritage assets within and in the vicinity of the site is included at **Appendix 5**.

Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area

- 6.10. The Middleton Conservation Area was first designated in 1978, with the boundary extended in 2009. The Conservation Area has an adopted Conservation Area Appraisal (2008) with this document providing an overview as to the important elements of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area which contribute to its heritage significance.
- 6.11. The designation area covers the northern part of the town, which was the focus of pre-industrial Middleton before later development spread the settlement southwards. Through the 18th and 19th centuries, Middleton grew from a pastoral township with a Medieval layout, into a large industrious town of weavers, first as a cottage

industry, and then within factories during the Victorian period.

- 6.12. Long Street is the backbone of the town's centre. The road stretches on a north-south axis with continuous row of eclectic shop frontages at its south end interspersed with prominent buildings such as Long Street Methodist Church and School. Further north Long Street opens up revealing the timber framed Old Boars Head public house, Library and Local Studies centre and Jubilee Park which was laid out within the tight boundaries of a field of Glebe Land connecting the Church of St Leonard to the rectory.
- 6.13. As Long Street becomes Rochdale Road, the built environment can be characterised as a late 19th and 20th-century residential townscape with a suburban feel.
- 6.14. The influence of one of the most influential British architects at the turn of the 20th-century Edgar Wood, a native of Middleton, make a major contribution to the character and special interest of the Conservation Area. Wood's commissions were mainly domestic, but his Arts and Crafts vocabulary is also legible in public and commercial buildings in the town.
- 6.15. This following assessment will focus on the northern section of the Conservation Area which comprises Middleton Cricket Club, Rochdale Road to the east and Towncroft Avenue to its southern boundary, with this having been identified as the only element of the

¹⁶ [Middleton non-designated heritage assets | Non-designated heritage assets | Rochdale Borough Council](#) (Accessed 18th July 2025).

Conservation Area that has the potential to be sensitive to the proposals.

- 6.16. As previously stated, the Site is located at the northern edge of the Conservation Area within the cricket ground. The cricket ground dates to the late 19th-century and illustrates the evolution of the late Victorian social model for the provision of outdoor recreational amenities to improve the health and wellbeing of the working local community.
- 6.17. The cricket ground is formed of an open space, with its outer sides partly lined with trees and partly bounded by residential dwellings. There is a traditional cricket pavilion with elements of Gothic and Old English design within the south-western extent of the cricket ground, which has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset by the Local Planning Authority on their website.¹⁷ Other structures around the pitch are modern, including that which encloses the Site to the south.
- 6.18. Semi-detached houses of late 19th-century date are located along the eastern boundary of the cricket club complex facing east onto Rochdale Road, and away from the cricket ground in a form of ribbon development. Many of these houses have also been identified as non-designated heritage assets by the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.19. This development pattern changed in the early 20th-century when the land to south of the ground was developed with a series of detached and semi-detached

houses which faced onto the cricket ground, providing a distinctly suburban character to this part of the Conservation Area.

- 6.20. This open space of Middleton Cricket Club has strongly influenced the measured development of suburban houses along Towncroft Avenue. The houses around the perimeter of the cricket ground and along Rochdale Road are typically of higher quality than the earlier house types within Middleton which are modest terraced houses for factory workers. Several of these houses are Grade II Listed, including Arkholme (NHLE 1391983), Nos 51 and 53 Rochdale Road (NHLE ref: 1356254), Hillcrest and Briarhill (NHLE ref: 1447739) and Redcroft and Fencegate (NHLE ref: 1162377).
- 6.21. Red brick and slate roofs are the dominant building materials within the designation area, with some examples of render. Brickwork and stone dressings are used for decorative effect on the elevations of the higher status houses.

¹⁷ [Middleton non-designated heritage assets | Non-designated heritage assets | Rochdale Borough Council](#) (Accessed 18th July 2025)

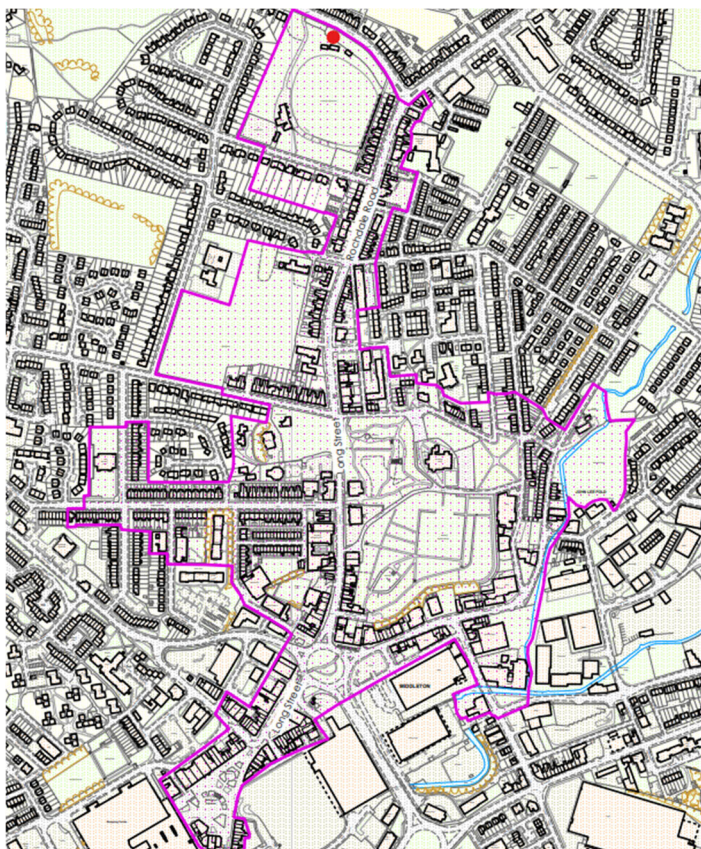


Plate 21: Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area boundary with approximate location of Site indicated in red (Source: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council).

Statement of Significance

- 6.22. The significance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area is principally derived from those elements of its intrinsic character and appearance as detailed above. These comprise aspects of its historic layout and street patterns, historic built form and

important green spaces, all of which contribute to the combined historic, architectural, and artistic interest of the designation area.

- 6.23. Historic interest is derived from Middleton's medieval layout, which comprised a parish church, associated rectory and glebe land, manor and mill, has shaped the growth of the town in the industrial period with a public park and worker's housing established on former Glebe Land.
- 6.24. Further historic interest stems from the town's expansion through the 19th-century, with the provision of suburban villas and semi-detached houses, as well as recreational facilities including the Middleton Cricket Club, which reflects its period of growth connected to local industry.
- 6.25. In addition to 18th and 19th-century buildings, the influence of Edgar Wood described by Nikolaus Pevsner as "*one of England's most original architects of the interesting period of 1900*" is discernible in the high concentration of Arts and Crafts houses, civic buildings and churches within the Conservation Area and contributes to the asset's architectural and artistic interest.
- 6.26. The Conservation Area Appraisal does not identify any key views within the northern part of the Conservation Area around the cricket ground. Most of the asset's heritage interests are appreciated as part of incidental and dynamic views within and towards the designation area.



Plate 22: Grade II Listed houses on Rochdale Road by Edgar Wood.



Plate 24: Semi-detached houses along west side of Rochdale Road.



Plate 23: View north along Rochdale Road.



Plate 25: Junction of Rochdale Road and Hollin Lane looking west.

The Contribution of the Site

- 6.27. The open space of Middleton Cricket Club complex is considered to be an integral part of the Conservation Area that contributes spatially and visually to its character and appearance and thus significance. The well-tended circular cricket field and pitch is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as having “*suburban synergy*” with the surrounding residential streets, many of which were laid out to enjoy views across the pitch.
- 6.28. However, not all elements of the cricket club complex are considered to make the same level of contribution.
- 6.29. The spatial openness and character of the pitch, the built form of the late 19th-century/early 20th-century pavilion and the mature planting along the northern boundary of the cricket grounds all form parts of the complex which positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in this locality.
- 6.30. Late 20th and 21st-century structures and ‘back of house’ areas are not considered to form parts of the complex which positively contribute to the overall contribution which the complex makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in this locality.
- 6.31. The Site forms a minor part of the wider Cricket Club complex which holds no intrinsic value in its own right. It comprises an unused ‘back of house’ area situated along the northern boundary and enclosed to the south by modern built form. There is limited visibility of the Site from within the wider Cricket Club complex, and it is not considered to form part of the complex which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in this locality
- 6.32. In relation to views towards the Site from beyond the Cricket Club complex, it is noted that historically the cricket pitch had an open aspect to the surrounding streets (Plate 14). However, views from the streets have, over the years been curtailed by trees and screening which restricts visibility of the Site.
- 6.33. From Hollin Lane along the north boundary of the Conservation Area, views to the Site and the wider cricket ground are screened and filtered by existing boundary treatments. To some extent, it is not possible to appreciate the open expanse of the cricket pitch from this vantage point.
- 6.34. There are more open vistas northwards from the houses along Townsend Avenue across the cricket ground to the Site, although perimeter tree planting and a further row of trees skirting the southern boundary of the pitch restrict views towards the Site to the north of the cricket pitch when the trees are in leaf.

Nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road

- 6.35. Nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road were added to the National List at Grade II on 23rd March 1987 (NHLE Ref. 1356254). The List Entry describes the building as follows:

"Pair of semi-detached houses. 1900. By Edgar Wood. Brick with stone dressings and graduated stone slate roof. Total of four bays and two storeys (plus attics) with paired central doorways and a wing to rear. Projecting plinth and stone quoins. Central doors have leaded upper panels and leaded overlights with moulded lintels in the Yorkshire tradition above flat hoods. Symmetry is avoided by having single storey canted bay window in bay 4 as opposed to a 2-storey one in bay 1 which breaks through the overhanging eaves: The windows have chamfered stone mullions and leaded lights, they have transoms on the ground floor and are of 2 or 4 lights. Gabled dormer windows. Gable chimney stacks. Leaded casements below segmental brick arches to sides and rear."

- 6.36. A full copy of the List Entry is included at **Appendix 6**.
- 6.37. The principal (east) elevation is simply asymmetrical, with a two-storey bay window to no. 51, breaking away from more traditional Classical design.
- 6.38. Wood marries a rather simple architectural form, with vernacular materials to create the picturesque quality favoured by avant-garde architects of the period. Of note is the use of common brick, rather than the more traditional use of stone for 'polite' architecture.

- 6.39. It is thought that Nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road was the forerunner for Wood's later designs, for example 36 Mellalieu Street nearby.

- 6.40. Nos 51 and 53 Rochdale Road are located on the west side of Rochdale Road facing east. The houses are set back from the pavement behind front gardens bounded by low brick walls and railings to the east, and modern timber boarded fencing to the south on Townsend Avenue (Plate 27).



Plate 26: Front (east) elevation of nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road.

- 6.41. The pair of houses are encountered in dynamic views while travelling along Rochdale Road. In views northwards along this road, the south gable end of No.51 is prominent and framed by mature trees behind it to the west (Plate 28). To the rear of the Listed Building is a back lane running parallel to Rochdale Road which separates the

rear gardens of the street fronting properties from land associated with Middleton Cricket Club (Plate 29).

Statement of Significance

- 6.42. The Grade II Listing of the building highlights it is a heritage asset of the less than the highest significance as defined by the *NPPF*.¹⁸ This significance is consolidated by its inclusion within the boundaries of the Middleton Conservation Area.
- 6.43. The heritage significance of Nos 51 and 53 Rochdale Road is principally embodied in its physical fabric, from which it derives architectural, artistic and historic interest.
- 6.44. Nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road is a well-preserved example of Arts and Crafts domestic architecture, where a picturesque quality is created through the use of materials, rather than an elaborate asymmetrical form. The building reflects a shift in architectural expression in this regard.
- 6.45. The Listed Building's association with the internally renowned architect of the period Edgar Wood contributes to its historic interest.



Plate 27: Views westwards from Rochdale Road.

¹⁸ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 213.



Plate 28: View looking north-west towards no.51 Rochdale Road.



Plate 29: Rear lane behind Nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road.

6.46. The setting of the asset also contributes to the significance of the asset, although the significance derived from the setting is less than that derived from its historic fabric. The principal elements of the physical surrounds and experience of the asset (its "setting") which are considered to contribute to its heritage significance comprise:

- The building's associated residential curtilage;
- The spatial and visual relationship with Rochdale Road onto which the semi-detached houses face and from where their architectural and artistic interest can be best appreciated; and
- Its spatial and visual relationship with other domestic buildings designed by Edgar Wood in the suburban area of Middleton.

The Contribution of the Site

- 6.47. The Site lies c.180m north-west of the asset, with the intervening area comprising the Middleton Cricket Club complex and adjacent residential development along Rochdale Road.
- 6.48. The 1839 Tithe Map for the Parish of Middleton shows that the land on which the Listed Buildings was built and the Site were historically sections of glebe landholdings owned by Reverend Durnford and occupied by John Haigh.
- 6.49. However, by the late 19th-century when Nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road were constructed, there was no association, either through ownership or function,

between the residential properties, and the Site, which forms part of a cricket ground.

- 6.50. There is no co-visibility between the Listed Building and the area of the proposed works on the Site due to the existence of established trees along the southeastern boundary of the cricket ground which screens views of the Site from the surrounding streets.
- 6.51. There is anticipated to be intervisibility between the Listed Buildings and the Site. However, contrary to the Officer Report's assessment that there will be clear views of the proposed development from this designated asset, on-site analysis concluded that views from the asset towards the Site would be limited and contained to the upper floor at the western side of the Listed Building, which is the rear elevation and of lesser significance. The first-floor windows are orientated westwards, so the Site to the north-west does not feature in direct lines of sight from them, and oblique views across the Cricket Club towards the Site would be filtered by trees along the west boundary of the club complex.
- 6.52. It is important to reiterate that the Listed Building turns its back on the cricket ground which pre-dates the construction of the dwellings, and therefore any visibility of the Site from the Listed Buildings is incidental, rather than designed.
- 6.53. It is therefore concluded that while the Site forms part of the wider surrounds of the Grade II Listed Buildings, it is well beyond its defined domestic curtilage and is not part of any key views from the asset and does not contribute to its overall heritage significance.

- 6.54. On this basis and taking into account the nature of change that would occur, it is not considered that the asset would be sensitive to the proposals and will not be taken forward for further assessment in **Section 7**.

Arkholme

- 6.55. Arkholme was added to the National List at Grade II on 4th October 2007 (NHLE Ref. 1391983). A full copy of the List Entry is included at **Appendix 7**.
- 6.56. The Listed Building is a former photographic studio constructed in 1901 by Edgar Wood. It was designed for the photographer Charles Jackson, the brother of Wood's friend the artist, Fred W Jackson. The studio was adapted to a house in 1905.
- 6.57. The building is constructed from red brick, with a mix of pitched slate and flat reinforced concrete roofs which cover around 70% of the floorplan of the building (Plate 30). This use of concrete technology was experimental at the time of its design. Other notable features including the exceptionally large window, framed in timber and load bearing, on the house's north (street) elevation. A single storey garage with shallow pitched roof is attached to the west gable of the building.
- 6.58. Arkholme occupies a street fronting plot on Townsend Avenue. It is slightly set back from the street, behind low brick walls with brick piers and railings. Its unusual eastern gable is first encountered while travelling along Rochdale Road (Plate 32), while its front elevation is best experienced in immediate views from Townsend Avenue.
- 6.59. The house is orientated north-east to look across Townsend Avenue. A review of historic maps show that these views would have looked across two gardens/paddocks to the rear of the houses fronting Rochdale Road, rather than across the cricket pitch (Plate 33).



Plate 30: North (front) elevation of Arkholme.



Plate 31: East gable of Arkholme.



Plate 32: View westwards along Townsend Avenue.



Plate 33: View north from the front elevation of Arkholme.

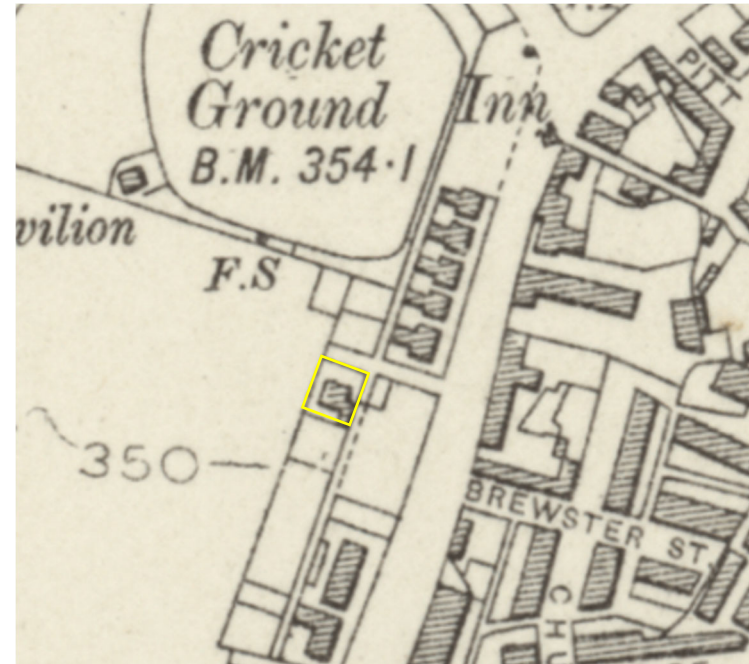


Plate 34: Extract from 1910 Ordnance Survey showing original setting of the asset which is indicated in yellow.

Statement of Significance

6.60. The Grade II Listing of the building highlights it is a heritage asset of the less than the highest significance as defined by the *NPPF*.¹⁹ This significance is consolidated by its inclusion within the boundaries of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area.

6.61. The heritage significance of Arkholme is principally embodied in the architectural, artistic and historic interest of its physical fabric, with the List Entry identifying the 'reasons for designation' as follows:

“It displays a high level of architectural interest in terms of its simple form and use of materials

**** It is a transitional and early example of modernism by the celebrated architect Edgar Wood, which anticipates his later more developed work***

**** It has a virtually intact original interior and plan***

**** The early use of reinforced concrete flat roofs shows innovation in construction***

**** Relatively intact examples of photographic studios are not common and this is an interesting example whose form reflects its function***

**** It has group value with four adjacent houses also designed by Edgar Wood all of which are listed in Grade II.”***

6.62. The setting of the asset also contributes to the significance of the asset, although the significance derived from the setting is less than that derived from its historic fabric. The principal elements of the physical surrounds and experience of the asset (its “*setting*”) which are considered to contribute to its heritage significance comprise:

- Its relationship with its associated domestic curtilage which remains unchanged from its construction, and the experience of the asset from this location;
- The spatial and visual relationship with Townsend Avenue onto which the house faces and from where the innovative architectural character of the building can be best appreciated; and
- Its spatial and visual relationship with other houses designed by Edgar Wood in the suburban area of Middleton.

The Contribution of the Site

6.1. The Site lies c200m north-west of the asset, with the intervening area comprising the Middleton Cricket Club complex and an area of scrubland with trees to its southern perimeter, and Townsend Avenue.

6.2. The 1839 Tithe Map for the Parish of Middleton shows that the land on which Arkholme was built, and the Site were historically sections of glebe landholdings owned by

¹⁹ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 213.

Reverend Richard Durnford Rector and occupied by John Haigh.

- 6.3. However, by the early 20th century when Arkhome was constructed, there was no association, either through ownership or function, between the residential properties, and the Site, which forms part of a cricket ground.
- 6.4. No intervisibility or co-visibility between Arkholme and the Site were identified during the site visit due to tall trees along the southern boundary of the cricket grounds which were in leaf and screened views. Intervisibility may be possible at times when the vegetation is not in full leaf; however, such views would remain filtered by intervening vegetation and the boundary fencing to the Cricket Club, with distance also being a factor. Moreover, there is no evidence of any design interaction between Arkholme and the Site, such as designed views.
- 6.5. It is therefore concluded that while the Site forms part of the wider surrounds of the Grade II Listed Arkholme, it is situated well beyond its defined domestic curtilage and immediate surrounds, does not form part of any key views from or towards the asset, and does not contribute to the overall heritage significance of the asset.
- 6.6. On this basis and taking into account the nature of change that would occur, it is not considered that the asset would be sensitive to the proposals, specifically the proposals would in no way alter the understanding or experience of the 'reasons for designation' as set out within the List Entry. As such, this asset will not be taken forward for further assessment in **Section 7**.

Hillcrest and Briarhall Nos 37 – 39 Rochdale Road

- 6.7. Hillcrest and Briarhall was added to the National List at Grade II on 5th September 2017 (NHLE Ref. 1447739). The List Entry, a full copy of which is provided at **Appendix 8**, provides the following summary of the asset:

"A semi-detached pair of houses of 1892 by internationally-renowned architect Edgar Wood, in red brick with slate roofs and with highly individual and innovative design including elements found in the earliest Art Nouveau houses in the world."
- 6.8. Hillcrest was converted into hotel in the late 20th century; however, it has been vacant for a number of years and is now in a poor state of repair. Its two-storey bay window has been removed leaving an opening in the front elevation which has been boarded alongside other windows and doors.
- 6.9. Hillcrest and Briarhill face onto Rochdale Road to the east. The dwellings form part of a row of detached and semi-detached residential properties along Rochdale Road.

Statement of Significance
- 6.10. The Grade II Listing of the building highlights it is a heritage asset of the less than the highest significance as

defined by the *NPPF*.²⁰ This significance is consolidated by its inclusion within the boundaries of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area.

- 6.11. The heritage significance of Hillcrest and Briarhill is principally embodied in their architectural and historic interest as innovative designs of the period by the internationally renowned Edgar Wood, with the List Entry identifying the 'reasons for designation' as follows:

"Architectural interest:

**** As an excellent example of innovative design for the period, sharing many characteristics with the most avant-garde designs of the time in continental Europe and anticipating elements of the architect's later pioneering Modernist design;***

**** For the good survival of the internal plan-form and retention of many interior decorative features, particularly at Briarhill;***

**** For the strong visual and historical relationship with the adjacent pair of Redcroft and Fencegate (NHLE no. 1162377) by the same designer (who lived in Redcroft until 1916), and close proximity and shared features with two of Wood's other listed buildings at 51-53 Rochdale Road (NHLE no. 1356254), and Arkholme (NHLE no. 1391983);***

Historical interest:

**** For their attribution to the internationally-renowned architect Edgar Wood."***



Plate 35: Front (west) elevation of Hillcrest and Briarhall.

- 6.12. The setting of the asset also contributes to the significance of the asset, although the significance derived from the setting is less than that derived from its historic fabric. The principal elements of the physical surrounds and experience of the asset (its "setting") which are considered to contribute to its heritage significance comprise:

²⁰ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 213.

- Its generous garden plots bounded by original walls to the south and east which reinforce the status of the residences as part of the 19th-century development of Middleton;
- The spatial and visual relationship with Rochdale Road onto which the buildings are orientated and from there the innovative architectural character of the buildings can be best appreciated; and
- Its spatial and visual relationship with other houses designed by Edgar Wood in the suburban area of Middleton, as noted in the List Entry, which contributes to an understanding of the architect's innovative style at the turn of the 20th century.



Plate 36: Oblique view of Hillcrest and Briarhall while travelling along Rochdale Road.

The Contribution of the Site

- 6.13. The 1839 Tithe Map for the Parish of Middleton shows that the land on which the Listed Building was built and the Site were historically sections of glebe landholdings owned by Reverend Durnford and occupied by John Haigh.
- 6.14. However, by the early 20th century when Hillcrest and Briarhill were constructed, there was no association, either through ownership or function, between the residential properties, and the Site, which forms part of a cricket ground.
- 6.15. There is no clear historic or functional association between Hillcrest and Briarhill and the Site, nor is there any intervisibility or co-visibility between asset and the Site due to the distance and intervening built form between the two locations.
- 6.16. It is therefore concluded that while the Site forms part of the wider surrounds of the Grade II Listed Building, it is well beyond its defined domestic curtilage, does not form part of any key views from or towards the asset and does not contribute to the overall heritage significance of the asset.
- 6.17. On this basis and taking into account the nature of change that would occur, it is not considered that the asset would be sensitive to the proposals, specifically the proposals would in no way alter the understanding or experience of the 'reasons for designation' as set out within the List Entry, the asset will not be taken forward for further assessment in **Section 7**.

Summary

- 6.18. This assessment has concluded that only the **Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area** has the potential to be sensitive to the proposed development and will be discussed in detail within the assessment section below.
- 6.19. With regard to the Grade II Listed Nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road (NHLE 1356254), Arkholme (NHLE 1391983) and Hillcrest and Briarhill (37-39 Rochdale Road) this assessment, based upon professional judgement and on-site analysis, concluded that the Site did not form part of the assets' settings that contributes to their overall significance, primarily due to the lack of visual connections, spatial relationships or historic connections.
- 6.20. Furthermore, the proposals would in no way alter the understanding or experience of the significance of the assets, as set out in the 'reasons for designation' within the List Entry for Arkholme and Hillcrest and Briarhill.

7. Assessment of Impacts

- 7.1. As detailed above, the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)* requires that applications for Planning Permission are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policy guidance set out within the *NPPF* is considered to be a material consideration which attracts significant weight in the decision-making process.
- 7.2. Section 72(1) of the Act confirms that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the asset, as well as the protection of the character and appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 7.3. In addition, the *NPPF* states that the impact of development proposals should be considered against the particular significance of heritage assets, such as Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, and this needs to be the primary consideration when determining the acceptability of the proposals.
- 7.4. It is also important to consider whether the proposals cause harm. If they do, then one must consider whether the harm represents "*substantial harm*" or "*less than substantial harm*" to the identified designated heritage assets, in the context of paragraphs 214 and 215 of the *NPPF*.²¹
- 7.5. The *PPG* clarifies that within each category of harm ("*less than substantial*" or "*substantial*"), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.²²
- 7.6. The guidance set out within the *PPG* also clarifies that "*substantial harm*" is a high test, and that it may not arise in many cases. It makes it clear that it is the degree of harm to the significance of the asset, rather than the scale of development, which is to be assessed.²³ In addition, it has been clarified in a High Court Judgement of 2013 that substantial harm would be harm that would:
- "...have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced."**²⁴
- 7.7. As detailed in **Section 6**, only Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area has been identified as being sensitive to the proposals. The non-designated heritage assets within its bounds are considered as part of this assessment.
- 7.8. When considering potential impacts on the Conservation Area, it is important to note that the Site forms only one small part of the asset.
- 7.9. Paragraph 220 of the *NPPF* states that it is necessary to consider the relevant significance of the element of the Conservation Area which has the potential to be affected

²¹ MHCLG, *NPPF*, paras. 214 and 215.

²² MHCLG, *PPG*, Paragraph: 018 (ID: 18a-018-20190723 Revision date: 23.07.2019).

²³ MHCLG, *PPG*, Paragraph: 018 (ID: 18a-018-20190723 Revision date: 23.07.2019).

²⁴ EWHC 2847, R DCLG and Nuon UK Ltd v. Bedford Borough Council.

and its contribution to the significance of the designation as a whole, i.e., would the application proposals undermine the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole?²⁵

- 7.10. This approach, and its compliance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, is supported by Case Law, with a 2020 High Court Judgement confirming that:

“Section 72 requires an overall assessment of the likely impact of a proposed development on the conservation area, and not just that part of it where the development site is located”.²⁶ (my emphasis)

- 7.11. Whilst the application Site holds no intrinsic special interest that contributes to the overall significance of Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area, it is recognised that it forms part of the wider Middleton Cricket Club complex which is considered to make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the designation area. Thus, it is considered that the principal consideration is whether the proposed development would alter the character and appearance, and in turn experience and appreciation of the wider Middleton Cricket Club complex such that it would alter the contribution which the complex makes to the significance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.12. The proposed development would result in a change to the character of the Site, via the introduction of a tall vertical modern element above the existing tree line, and

the ground mounted equipment cabinets and associated compound. The proposals, primarily the tower, would be visible from within the bounds of the Middleton Cricket Club complex, including from areas which are considered to form part of the complex which positively contribute to the Conservation Area, such as the pitch and pavilion.

- 7.13. From these locations, the proposed tower and mounted equipment would be viewed as a modern feature which differs from the predominant characteristics of the Middleton Cricket Club complex and has the potential to alter the experience of the complex. That said, it should be noted that the proposals will be sited in part of the Middleton Cricket Club complex which has already been subject to change and avoids part of the complex which are considered to be of particular value in the context of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.14. In addition, due to the screening provided by the surrounding built form, views of the associated ancillary equipment and compound from the wider the Middleton Cricket Club complex are anticipated to be limited. Where visible, they would be understood alongside other modern structures such as the cricket nets, signage and sheds.
- 7.15. As stated previously, existing views of the Site from outside the Cricket Club complex are largely restricted or limited due to intervening built form and trees.
- 7.16. Views into and across the cricket ground from Townsend Avenue are now mostly filtered by mature trees within

²⁵ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 220.

²⁶ *Spitfire Bespoke Homes Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing Communities And Local Government* [2020] EWHC 958 (Admin).

the grounds, although more visibility is anticipated at times when the vegetation is not in full leaf. In these views, while the proposed mast may project above the treeline to the north of the cricket grounds, it would not be visually prominent.

7.17. In addition, and as set out in **Section 2**, it should also be taken into account that the type of telecommunications mast proposed has been specifically chosen in order to assimilate with the existing mature vegetation adjacent to the Site to reduce potential impacts on the surrounding historic environment, in accordance with Paragraph 208 of the NPPF

7.18. The proposed development would not impact on the spatial qualities of the historic open space of the cricket ground and its contribution to the character and appearance of the asset, and thus its significance, nor will it impact on an understanding of the interrelationship between the cricket ground, and the surrounding suburban development of Middleton from the turn of the 20th century.

7.19. On balance, taking into account the proposed location and design of the mast, the character of the Site and existing tree screening, it is considered that the proposed development would result in a change to an isolated part of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area which would result in a less than substantial harm to the overall heritage significance of the asset. When considered in the context of the Conservation Area as a whole, it is considered that the **less than substantial harm** identified would be at the **lower end of the spectrum**.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. Pegasus Group have been commissioned by Perry Williams Ltd, on behalf of United Living Connected, to prepare a Heritage Statement to consider the proposed installation of a telecommunications equipment at land at Middleton Cricket Club, Middleton.
- 8.2. It is concluded that the proposed telecommunications equipment would result in a change to an isolated part of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area which would result in a less than substantial harm to the overall heritage significance asset.
- 8.3. When assessed in the context of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area as a whole, it is considered that the less than substantial harm identified would be at the lower end of the spectrum.

Appendix 1: Assessment Methodology

Assessment of significance

In the *NPPF*, heritage significance is defined 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. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site’s Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.”²⁷

Historic England's *GPA:2* gives advice on the assessment of significance as part of the application process. It advises understanding the nature, extent, and level of significance of a heritage asset.²⁸

In order to do this, *GPA 2* also advocates considering the four types of heritage value an asset may hold, as identified in English Heritage's *Conservation Principles*.²⁹ These essentially cover the heritage ‘interests’ given in the glossaries of the *NPPF* and the *PPG* which are archaeological, architectural and artistic, and historic.³⁰

The *PPG* provides further information on the interests it identifies:

- **Archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **Architectural and artistic interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.
- **Historic interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.³¹

²⁷ MHCLG, *NPPF*, Annex 2.

²⁸ Historic England, *GPA:2*.

²⁹ Historic England, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (London, April 2008). These heritage values

are identified as being ‘aesthetic’, ‘communal’, ‘historical’ and ‘evidential’, see *idem* pp. 28–32.

³⁰ MHCLG, *NPPF*, Annex 2; MHCLG, *PPG*, paragraph 006, reference ID: 18a-006-20190723.

³¹ MHCLG, *PPG*, paragraph 006, reference ID: 18a-006-20190723.

Significance results from a combination of any, some, or all of the interests described above.

Historic England guidance on assessing heritage significance, *HEAN:12*, advises using the terminology of the *NPPF* and *PPG*, and thus it is that terminology which is used in this Report.³²

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are generally designated for their special architectural and historic interest. Scheduling is predominantly, although not exclusively, associated with archaeological interest.

Setting and significance

As defined in the *NPPF*:

“Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”³³

Setting is defined 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.”³⁴

Therefore, setting can contribute to, affect an appreciation of significance, or be neutral with regards to heritage values.

Assessing change through alteration to setting

How setting might contribute to these values has been assessed within this Report with reference to *GPA:3*, particularly the checklist given on page 11. This advocates the clear articulation of “*what matters and why*”.³⁵

In *GPA:3*, a stepped approach is recommended, of which Step 1 is to identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected. Step 2 is to assess whether, how and to what degree settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated. The guidance includes a (non-exhaustive) checklist of elements of the physical surroundings of an asset that might be considered when undertaking the assessment including, among other things: topography, other heritage assets, green space, functional relationships and degree of change over time. It also lists aspects associated with the experience of the asset which might be considered, including: views, intentional intervisibility, tranquillity, sense of enclosure, accessibility, rarity and land use.

Step 3 is to assess the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset(s). Step 4 is to explore ways to maximise enhancement and minimise harm. Step 5 is to make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

A Court of Appeal judgement has confirmed that whilst issues of visibility are important when assessing setting, visibility does not necessarily confer a contribution to significance and factors other than visibility should also be considered, with Lindblom LJ stating at

³² Historic England, *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*, Historic England Advice Note 12 (Swindon, October 2019).

³³ MHCLG, *NPPF*, Annex 2.

³⁴ MHCLG, *NPPF*, Annex 2.

³⁵ Historic England, *GPA:3*, pp. 8, 11.

paragraphs 25 and 26 of the judgement (referring to an earlier Court of Appeal judgement):

Paragraph 25 – “But – again in the particular context of visual effects – I said that if “a proposed development is to affect the setting of a listed building there must be a distinct visual relationship of some kind between the two – a visual relationship which is more than remote or ephemeral, and which in some way bears on one’s experience of the listed building in its surrounding landscape or townscape” (paragraph 56)”.

Paragraph 26 – “This does not mean, however, that factors other than the visual and physical must be ignored when a decision-maker is considering the extent of a listed building’s setting. Generally, of course, the decision-maker will be concentrating on visual and physical considerations, as in Williams (see also, for example, the first instance judgment in R. (on the application of Miller) v North Yorkshire County Council [2009] EWHC 2172 (Admin), at paragraph 89). But it is clear from the relevant national policy and guidance to which I have referred, in particular the guidance in paragraph 18a–013–20140306 of the PPG, that the Government recognizes the potential relevance of other considerations – economic, social and historical. These other considerations may include, for example, “the historic relationship between places”. Historic England’s advice in GPA3 was broadly to the same effect.”³⁶

Levels of significance

Descriptions of significance will naturally anticipate the ways in which impacts will be considered. Hence descriptions of the significance of Conservation Areas will make reference to their special interest and character and appearance, and the significance of Listed Buildings will be discussed with reference to the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

In accordance with the levels of significance articulated in the *NPPF* and the *PPG*, three levels of significance are identified:

- **Designated heritage assets of the highest significance**, as identified in paragraph 213 of the *NPPF*, comprising Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, World Heritage Sites and Registered Battlefields (and also including some Conservation Areas) and non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments, as identified in footnote 75 of the *NPPF*;³⁷
- **Designated heritage assets of less than the highest significance**, as identified in paragraph 213 of the *NPPF*, comprising Grade II Listed Buildings and Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens (and also some Conservation Areas);³⁸ and

³⁶ *Catesby Estates Ltd. v. Steer* [2018] EWCA Civ 1697, paras. 25 and 26.

³⁷ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 213 and fn. 75.

³⁸ MHCLG, *NPPF*, para. 213.

- **Non-designated heritage assets.** Non-designated heritage assets are defined within the PPG as *"buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets"*.³⁹

Additionally, it is of course possible that sites, buildings or areas have no heritage significance.

Assessment of harm

Assessment of any harm will be articulated in terms of the policy and law that the proposed development will be assessed against, such as whether a proposed development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, and articulating the scale of any harm in order to inform a balanced judgement/weighting exercise as required by the NPPF.

In accordance with key policy, the following levels of harm may potentially be identified for designated heritage assets:

- **Substantial harm or total loss.** It has been clarified in a High Court Judgement of 2013 that this would be harm that would *"have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced"*,⁴⁰ and

- **Less than substantial harm.** Harm of a lesser level than that defined above.

With regards to these two categories, the PPG states:

"Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated."⁴¹

Hence, for example, harm that is less than substantial would be further described with reference to where it lies on that spectrum or scale of harm, for example low end, middle, and upper end of the less than substantial harm spectrum/scale.

With regards to non-designated heritage assets, there is no basis in policy for describing harm to them as substantial or less than substantial, rather the NPPF requires that the scale of any harm or loss is articulated whilst having regard to the significance of the asset. Harm to such assets is therefore articulated as a level of harm to their overall significance, using descriptors such as minor, moderate and major harm.

It is also possible that development proposals will cause no harm or preserve the significance of heritage assets. Here, a High Court Judgement of 2014 is relevant. This concluded that with regard to preserving the setting of a Listed building or preserving the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, *"preserving"* means doing *"no harm"*.⁴²

Preservation does not mean no change, it specifically means no harm. GPA:2 states that *"Change to heritage assets is inevitable but*

³⁹ MHCLG, PPG, paragraph 039, reference ID: 18a-039-20190723.

⁴⁰ Bedford Borough Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [2013] EWHC 2847 (Admin), para. 25.

⁴¹ MHCLG, PPG, paragraph 018, reference ID: 18a-018-20190723.

⁴² R (Forge Field Society) v Sevenoaks District Council [2014] EWHC 1895 (Admin).

it is only harmful when significance is damaged".⁴³ Thus, change is accepted in Historic England's guidance as part of the evolution of the landscape and environment. It is whether such change is neutral, harmful or beneficial to the significance of an asset that matters.

As part of this, setting may be a key consideration. When evaluating any harm to significance through changes to setting, this Report follows the methodology given in *GPA:3*, described above. Fundamental to this methodology is a consideration of "*what matters and why*".⁴⁴ Of particular relevance is the checklist given on page 13 of *GPA:3*.⁴⁵

It should be noted that this key document also states:

"Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation..."⁴⁶

Hence any impacts are described in terms of how they affect the significance of a heritage asset, and heritage interests that contribute to this significance, through changes to setting.

With regards to changes in setting, *GPA:3* states that:

"Conserving or enhancing heritage assets by taking their settings into account need not prevent change".⁴⁷

Additionally, whilst the statutory duty requires that special regard should be paid to the desirability of not harming the setting of a Listed Building, that cannot mean that any harm, however minor,

would necessarily require Planning Permission to be refused. This point has been clarified in the Court of Appeal.⁴⁸

Benefits

Proposed development may also result in benefits to heritage assets, and these are articulated in terms of how they enhance the heritage interests, and hence the significance, of the assets concerned.

As detailed further in **Appendix 3** the *NPPF* (at Paragraphs 214 and 215) requires harm to a designated heritage asset to be weighed against the public benefits of the development proposals.⁴⁹

Recent High Court Decisions have confirmed that enhancement to the historic environment should be considered as a public benefit under the provisions of Paragraphs 214 to 216.⁵⁰

The *PPG* provides further clarity on what is meant by the term 'public benefit', including how these may be derived from enhancement to the historic environment ('heritage benefits'), as follows:

"Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a

⁴³ Historic England, *GPA:2*, p. 9.

⁴⁴ Historic England, *GPA:3*, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Historic England, *GPA:3*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ Historic England, *GPA:3*, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Historic England, *GPA 3*, p. 8.

⁴⁸ *Palmer v Herefordshire Council & Anor* [2016] EWCA Civ 1061.

⁴⁹ MHCLG, *NPPF*, paras. 214 and 215.

⁵⁰ Including – *Kay, R (on the application of) v Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2020] EWHC 2292 (Admin); MHCLG, *NPPF*, paras. 214 and 216.

private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

Examples of heritage benefits may include:

- *sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting*
- *reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset*
- *securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.”⁵¹*

Any “*heritage benefits*” arising from the proposed development, in line with the narrative above, will be clearly articulated in order for them to be taken into account by the decision maker.

⁵¹ MHCLG, *PPG*, paragraph 020, reference ID: 18a-020-20190723.

Appendix 2: Legislative Framework

Legislation relating to the built historic environment is primarily set out within the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, which provides statutory protection for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.⁵² It does not provide statutory protection for non-designated or Locally Listed heritage assets.

Section 66(1) of the Act goes on to state that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission [or permission in principle] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State, 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.”⁵³

In the 2014 Court of Appeal judgement in relation to the Barnwell Manor case, Sullivan LJ held that:

“Parliament in enacting section 66(1) did intend that the desirability of preserving the settings of listed buildings should not simply be given careful consideration by the decision-maker for the purpose of deciding whether there would be some harm, but should be given “considerable importance and weight”

when the decision-maker carries out the balancing exercise.”⁵⁴

A judgement in the Court of Appeal (‘Mordue’) has clarified that, with regards to the setting of Listed Buildings, where the principles of the NPPF are applied (in particular paragraph 134 of the 2012 version of the NPPF, the requirements of which are now given in paragraph 215 of the current, revised NPPF, see **Appendix 3**), this is in keeping with the requirements of the 1990 Act.⁵⁵

With regards to development within Conservation Areas, Section 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* states:

“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”⁵⁶

Unlike Section 66(1), Section 72(1) of the Act does not make reference to the setting of a Conservation Area. This makes it plain that it is the character and appearance of the designated Conservation Area that is the focus of special attention.

⁵² UK Public General Acts, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

⁵³ UK Public General Acts, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 66(1).

⁵⁴ Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v (1) East Northamptonshire DC & Others [2014] EWCA Civ 137. para. 24.

⁵⁵ Jones v Mordue [2015] EWCA Civ 1243.

⁵⁶ UK Public General Acts, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72(1).

In addition to the statutory obligations set out within the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Area) Act 1990*, Section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* requires that all planning applications, including those for Listed Building Consent, are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ UK Public General Acts, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 38(6).

Appendix 3: National Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

National policy and guidance is set out in the Government's *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* published in December 2024. This replaced and updated the previous *NPPF* (December 2023). The *NPPF* needs to be read as a whole and is intended to promote the concept of delivering sustainable development.

The *NPPF* sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government's vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations. The *NPPF* continues to recognise that the planning system is plan-led and that therefore Local Plans, incorporating Neighbourhood Plans, where relevant, are the starting point for the determination of any planning application, including those which relate to the historic environment.

The overarching policy change applicable to the proposed development is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This presumption in favour of sustainable development (the 'presumption') sets out the tone of the Government's overall stance and operates with and through the other policies of the *NPPF*. Its purpose is to send a strong signal to all those involved in the planning process about the need to plan positively for appropriate new development; so that both plan-making and development management are proactive and driven by a search for opportunities to deliver sustainable development, rather than barriers. Conserving historic assets in a manner appropriate to their significance forms part of this drive towards sustainable development.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and the *NPPF* sets out three 'objectives' to facilitate sustainable development: an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective. The presumption is key to delivering these objectives, by creating a positive pro-development framework which is underpinned by the wider economic, environmental and social provisions of the *NPPF*. The presumption is set out in full at paragraph 11 of the *NPPF* and reads as follows:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."

For plan-making this means that:

- a. all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;***
- b. strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:***
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting***

the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or

- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

For decision-taking this means:

- a. approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- b. where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

 - i. the application policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations,**

making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”⁵⁸

However, it is important to note that footnote 7 of the NPPF applies in relation to the final bullet of paragraph 11. This provides a context for paragraph 11 and reads as follows:

“The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 189) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.”⁵⁹ (our emphasis)

The NPPF continues to recognise that the planning system is planned and that therefore, Local Plans, incorporating Neighbourhood Plans, where relevant, are the starting point for the determination of any planning application.

Heritage Assets are defined in the NPPF as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage

⁵⁸ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 11.

⁵⁹ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 11, fn. 7.

assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)."⁶⁰

The NPPF goes on to define a Designated Heritage Asset as a:

"World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under relevant legislation."⁶¹

As set out above, significance is also defined as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance."⁶²

Section 16 of the NPPF relates to 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' and states at paragraph 208 that:

"Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on

a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."⁶³

Paragraph 210 goes on to state that:

"In determining planning 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."***⁶⁴

With regard to the impact of proposals on the significance of a heritage asset, paragraphs 212 and 213 are relevant and read as follows:

"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

⁶⁰ MHCLG, NPPF, Annex 2.

⁶¹ MHCLG, NPPF, Annex 2.

⁶² MHCLG, NPPF, Annex 2.

⁶³ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 208.

⁶⁴ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 210.

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.”⁶⁵

“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.”⁶⁶***

Section b) of paragraph 213, which describes assets of the highest significance, also includes footnote 75 of the NPPF, which states that non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

In the context of the above, it should be noted that paragraph 214 reads as follows:

“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.”⁶⁷***

Paragraph 215 goes on to state:

“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.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 212.

⁶⁶ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 213.

⁶⁷ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 214.

⁶⁸ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 215.

The NPPF also provides specific guidance in relation to development within Conservation Areas, stating at paragraph 219 that:

“Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.”⁶⁹

Paragraph 220 goes on to recognise that “not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance” and with regard to the potential harm from a proposed development states:

“Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.”⁷⁰ (our emphasis)

With regards to non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 216 of NPPF states that:

“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.”⁷¹

Overall, the NPPF confirms that the primary objective of development management is to foster the delivery of sustainable development, not to hinder or prevent it. Local Planning Authorities should approach development management decisions positively, looking for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved wherever it is practical to do so. Additionally, securing the optimum viable use of sites and achieving public benefits are also key material considerations for application proposals.

National Planning Practice Guidance

The then Department for Communities and Local Government (now the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)) launched the planning practice guidance web-based resource in March 2014, accompanied by a ministerial statement which confirmed that a number of previous planning practice guidance documents were cancelled.

⁶⁹ MHCLG, NPPF, para 219.

⁷⁰ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 220.

⁷¹ MHCLG, NPPF, para. 216.

This also introduced the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which comprised a full and consolidated review of planning practice guidance documents to be read alongside the NPPF.

The PPG has a discrete section on the subject of the Historic Environment, which confirms that the consideration of ‘significance’ in decision taking is important and states:

“Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.”⁷²

In terms of assessment of substantial harm, the PPG confirms that whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgement for the individual decision taker having regard to the individual circumstances and the policy set out within the NPPF. It goes on to state:

“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 harm.”⁷³ (our emphasis)

National Design Guide:

Section C2 relates to valuing heritage, local history and culture and states:

“When determining how a site may be developed, it is important to understand the history of how the place has evolved. The local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, and how these have influenced the built environment and wider landscape.”⁷⁴

“Sensitive re-use or adaptation adds to the richness and variety of a scheme and to its diversity of activities and users. It helps to integrate heritage into proposals in an environmentally sustainable way.”⁷⁵

⁷² MHCLG, PPG, paragraph 007, reference ID: 18a-007-20190723.

⁷³ MHCLG, PPG, paragraph 018, reference ID: 18a-018-20190723.

⁷⁴ MHCLG, NDG, para. 46.

⁷⁵ MHCLG, NDG, para. 47.

It goes on to state that:

"Well-designed places and buildings are influenced positively by:

- ***the history and heritage of the site, its surroundings and the wider area, including cultural influences;***
- ***the significance and setting of heritage assets and any other specific features that merit conserving and enhancing;***
- ***the local vernacular, including historical building typologies such as the terrace, town house, mews, villa or mansion block, the treatment of façades, characteristic materials and details – see Identity.***

Today's new developments extend the history of the context. The best of them will become valued as tomorrow's heritage, representing the architecture and placemaking of the early 21st century."⁷⁶

⁷⁶ MHCLG, NDG, paras. 48–49.

Appendix 4: Relevant Development Plan Policies

Rochdale Core Strategy 2016–2028

The following policies are deemed relevant to this application:

SO3 – To improve design, image and quality of place

To do this we will focus on:

1. *Raising design quality and promoting sustainable developments*
2. *Improving gateways into the borough and main transport corridors to improve the image of the borough;*
3. *Protecting and enhancing our heritage and natural assets, the special character of our towns, our countryside, open spaces, river valleys and water features; and*
4. *Creating new identity and character where it is lacking (e.g. inner areas and road corridors).*

P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

1. *We will protect and enhance the borough’s character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the qualities of its landscapes, utilising the considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. We will do this by:*
 - a. *Requiring new development to integrate successfully with the key natural features of the borough*

- b. *Requiring new development to take opportunities to protect and open up important views of hills and valleys which are part of the borough’s unique character*
 - c. *Restoring the River Roc and other water bodies to their place as key and attractive features of the borough, including opening up waterways where they have been covered, and enhancing their setting, heritage assets and biodiversity potential*
 - d. *Protecting, enhancing and utilising outstanding cultural landscapes*
 - e. *Conserving and enhancing townscape character*
2. *We will protect the borough’s heritage by:*
 - a. *Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:*
 - i. *Four outstanding conservation areas: Central Rochdale, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and Rock Nook/Summit*
 - ii. *Other designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments*
 - iii. *The heritage of the Co-operative movement, the Rochdale Pioneers and the Labour movement*

- iv. *The Edgar Wood and J. H. Sellers cultural heritage*
- v. *The heritage of the seventeenth and eighteenth century vernacular tradition*
- vi. *The engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways*
- b. *Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration*
- c. *Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes*
- d. *Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard'*

The Core Strategy is stated to replace the Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan and Policies (1999–2016) which is out of date. However, elements of this plan remain in place until the adoption of the proposed Allocations Development Plan. The section G/BE/9 relates to the conservation of Built Heritage.

Previously Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council have referred to the Places for Everyone Plan during the decision-making process which outlines development for several Greater Manchester boroughs. This took effect from 21st March 2024.

The following policies relate to the historic environment:

'Policy JP–P1 Sustainable Places

We aim to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places, each having the following key attributes that all development, wherever appropriate, should be consistent with:

1. *Distinctive, with a clear identity that:*
 - A. *Conserves and enhances the natural environment, landscape features, historic environment and local history and culture*
 - B. *Enables a clear understanding of how the place has developed*
 - C. *Respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, sizing, scale and materials used*

Places for Everyone Plan 2022 to 2039

The following policies are deemed relevant to this application:

Policy JP–P2: Heritage

We will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Opportunities will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester's distinct character, identity and sense of place.

Local Plans will set out the key elements which contribute to the district's identity, character and distinctiveness and which should be the priority for conserving and enhancing in the future and demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment and

the heritage values of sites, buildings or areas and their relationship with their surroundings. This knowledge should be used to inform the positive management and integration of our heritage by:

- 1. Setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making*
- 2. Ensuring that the heritage significance of a site or area is considered in accordance with national planning policy in the planning and design process and opportunities for interpretation and local engagement are optimised*
- 3. Integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, with creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place*
- 4. Delivering positive benefits that sustain and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic viability, accessibility and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing*
- 5. Exploring opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that restoration of historic buildings offers*

Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm. These include historic town centres, places of worship, historic transport routed including the canal network, industrial buildings and structures including textile mills, farmsteads and other sites, buildings, and areas of identified archaeological, architectural, artistic and/or historic value.

Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy.

Where heritage assets have been identified as being at risk, Local Plans should identify specific opportunities for them to contribute to regeneration and place-making, and they should set out strategies for their repair and re-use. Development proposals which will help safeguard the significance of and secure a sustainable future for Greater Manchester's heritage at risk will be supported in principle, provided they are not contrary to national policy or other policies in the development plan.

Proposals should be informed, as necessary, by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate heritage assessments in the development plan evidence base and/or any updated heritage assessment submitted as part of the planning application process.



Appendix 5: Figures

 Site
 Middleton Cricket Club
 500m Buffer

	I
	II
	II*

 Conservation Area

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION
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Appendix 6: 51 and 53 Rochdale Road List Entry

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1356254**

Date first listed: **23-Mar-1987**

List Entry Name: **Nos. 51 AND 53, ROCHDALE ROAD**

Statutory Address 1: **51 AND 53, ROCHDALE ROAD**

Location

Statutory Address: **51 AND 53, ROCHDALE ROAD**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: **Rochdale (Metropolitan Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **SD 87103 06720**

Details

SD 80 NE, 2/23

MIDDLETON, ROCHDALE ROAD (north-west side), Nos. 51 and 53

II

July 2025 | ES | P25-1701

Pair of semi-detached houses. 1900. By Edgar Wood. Brick with stone dressings and graduated stone slate roof. Total of four bays and two storeys (plus attics) with paired central doorways and a wing to rear. Projecting plinth and stone quoins. Central doors have leaded upper panels and leaded overlights with moulded lintels in the Yorkshire tradition above flat hoods. Symmetry is avoided by having single storey canted bay window in bay 4 as opposed to a 2-storey one in bay 1 which breaks through the overhanging eaves: The windows have chamfered stone mullions and leaded lights, they have transoms on the ground floor and are of 2 or 4 lights. Gabled dormer windows. Gable chimney stacks. Leaded casements below segmental brick arches to sides and rear.

Listing NGR: **SD8710306720**

Legacy

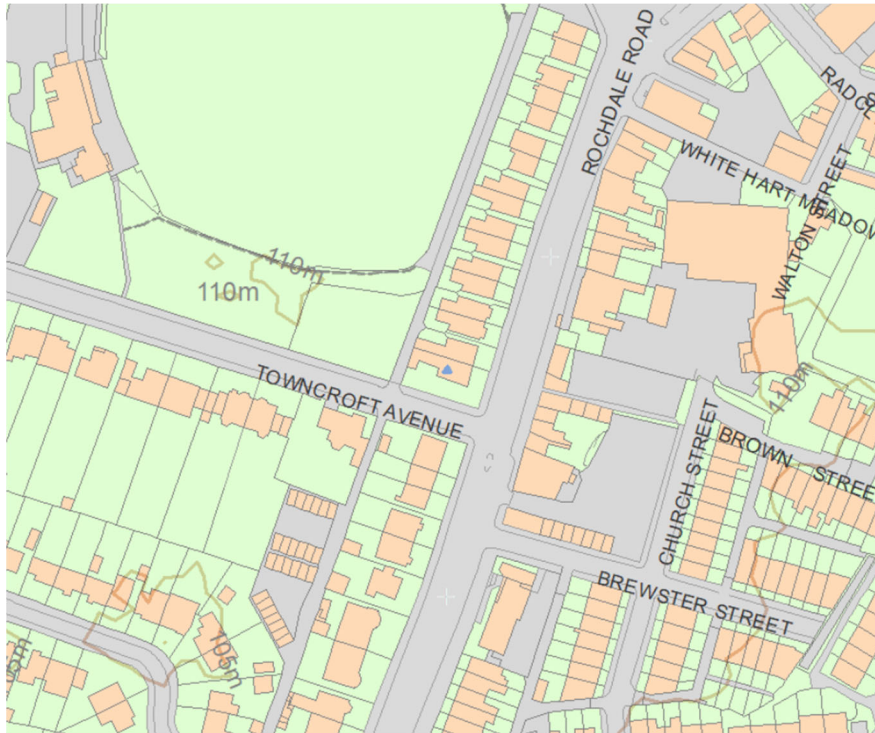
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: **213463**

Legacy System: **LBS**

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



End of official list entry

Appendix 7: Arkholme List Entry

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1391983**

Date first listed: **04-Oct-2007**

List Entry Name: **Arkholme**

Statutory Address 1: **Arkholme, 1, Towncroft Avenue**

Location

Statutory Address: **Arkholme, 1, Towncroft Avenue**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:

Rochdale (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **SD 87072 06702**

Reasons for Designation

This early C20 photographic studio, now a house, is designated, for the following principal reasons:

* It displays a high level of architectural interest in terms of its simple form and use of materials * It is a transitional and early example of modernism by the celebrated architect Edgar Wood, which anticipates his later more developed work * It has a virtually intact original interior and plan * The early use of reinforced concrete flat roofs shows innovation in construction * Relatively intact examples of photographic studios are not common and this is an interesting example whose form reflects its function * It has group value with four adjacent houses also designed by Edgar Wood all of which are listed in Grade II

Details

335/O/10070

TOWNCROFT AVENUE 1, Arkholme 04-OCT-07

GV II Photographic Studio of 1901 by Edgar Wood, adapted to a house in 1905.

MATERIALS: brick and reinforced concrete construction with roof tiles; stone capping to parapet and chimneys; weather-boarded bay windows.

PLAN: east-west rectangular range with a projecting wing to the north and two to the south.

EXTERIOR: North Elevation: two storeys and three bays constructed of brick under a steeply pitched tiled roof. The entrance bay to the left is projecting with a flat roof of reinforced concrete. The stone-capped parapet has a pair of diaper crosses and it is slightly raised in the centre. The main entrance contains a boarded door with four-light panes above and is protected by a large wooden canopy with

diagonal struts and a simple wrought iron stay. There is a small casement with a simple red brick arch to the left and a four-light first floor casement. A large ten-light casement window at ground level to the right lights the main studio, which would have relied on natural north light and above this, there are two three-light casements set immediately under the eaves; all windows are flush with the walls and all have leaded glass. A single storey garage attached to the right is a 1950s addition and is not of special interest.

South Elevation: formed by a full width flat roofed extension to the main house with a parapet wall capped in stone; brick chimney to the right hand bay. It has two storeys and two bays with a large ground floor canted bay and similar smaller bay to the right. At first floor there is a six-light oriel window and a three-light casement flush with the walls. Traces of an original, now blocked, first floor casement window are visible. The windows on this side are mostly 1950s insertions, intended to give the building a southerly aspect. A single storey flat roofed service range projects from the right with an original doorway, now blocked, and two inserted doorways. Attached to the south elevation there is a small terrace defined by low brick walls with brick pillars and stone cappings either side of a set of circular steps (not in situ) formed of paving slabs.

East Elevation: angular with a steeply pinched central gable and flat roofed extensions to either side; scattered leaded fenestration including a stair window and a double height canted bay window with art nouveau motifs.

West Elevation: angular with a pitched roof to the left and a flat roof to the right with a central chimney stack. A large external chimney obscures most original fenestration.

INTERIOR: the wall surfaces are mainly green distemper with cream ceilings, which is thought to be the original photographic studio

décor. A small cloakroom immediately to the left of the entrance lobby contains an original toilet and cistern. The entrance hall retains the form of the former waiting area, now with full height lincrusta panelling, and the main studio is entered to the right through large double doors. A stair rises in the corner of the waiting area to the first floor and is also decorated with lincrusta panels. The main studio has a central fireplace in Sicilian black marble with an alcove to the right and a blocked alcove to the left containing a later cupboard. The present dining room has a simple plaster briar ceiling rose and modern fireplace. The kitchen and scullery in a single storey range to the rear retain what are considered original wooden cupboards with glass doors, which probably held photographic chemicals. A cellar below, now accessed from the understairs cupboard was heated and is believed to be the location of an original dark room.

The first floor has four main rooms, accessed off a central narrow corridor with a partially coved ceiling; in the 1920s these rooms were used as two bedrooms, a maid's room and a dressing room. The smaller of the rooms have original corner fireplaces and coved ceilings. Documents show that a lavatory was added in c.1920; this has a wooden cistern and contemporary sanitary ware.

HISTORY: This building now known as Arkholme, but formerly called The Studio was constructed as a photographic studio in 1901 for the Jackson photographic business. It was designed by the nationally renowned architect Edgar Wood (1860–1935) and is his first overtly modern design and the first of his buildings to use flat reinforced concrete roofs. Wood was born and educated in Middleton, Rochdale. After qualifying as an architect in 1885, he established a practice in Middleton and then subsequently at Oldham and Manchester. The studio represents an early example of Wood's pioneer modernism phase in which he experimented with austere facades and reinforced concrete; some of his buildings during this time are considered examples of very early Modern architecture.

During his career, Wood designed many highly regarded buildings including the Grade II* listed Long Street Methodist Church, Middleton (1899), the Grade I listed First Church of Christ Scientist, Manchester (1903–7), Grade II* listed Halecroft (1890) and the Grade II* listed Durnford Street Infant's School

In 1905, The Studio became the home of Charles Jackson and was subsequently occupied from the 1920s until 2007 by the Taylor Family who carried out few alterations during this time. Limited decorative refurbishment occurred in the 1920s which included the modernisation of the electrical system throughout the building, the addition of lincrusta panelling in the hall and stairs, and a new first floor lavatory. A small lean-to building was demolished in c.1930 and a new garage erected. In the 1950s the fenestration of the south elevation was altered by the addition of two ground floor bay windows, the blocking of a first floor casement and the insertion of an oriel window. A new projecting external chimney stack was also constructed for the installation of a central fireplace in what had become the dining room.

SOURCES: Clare Hartwell, Matthew Hyde and Nikolaus Pevsner, Buildings of England. Edgar (1860–1935, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/61675>, accessed 5 July 2007]; Edwardian Architecture: A Biographical Dictionary by A. Stuart Gray.

REASON FOR DESIGNATION DECISION: This early C20 photographic studio, now a house is designated for the following principal reasons:

* It displays a high level of architectural interest in terms of its form and materials * It is a transitional and early example of modernism by the celebrated architect Edgar Wood, which anticipates his later more developed work * It has a virtually intact original interior and plan * The early use of reinforced concrete flat roofs shows

innovation in construction * Relatively intact examples of photographic studios are not common and this is an interesting example * It has group value with four adjacent houses also by Edgar Wood all of which are listed in Grade II

Legacy

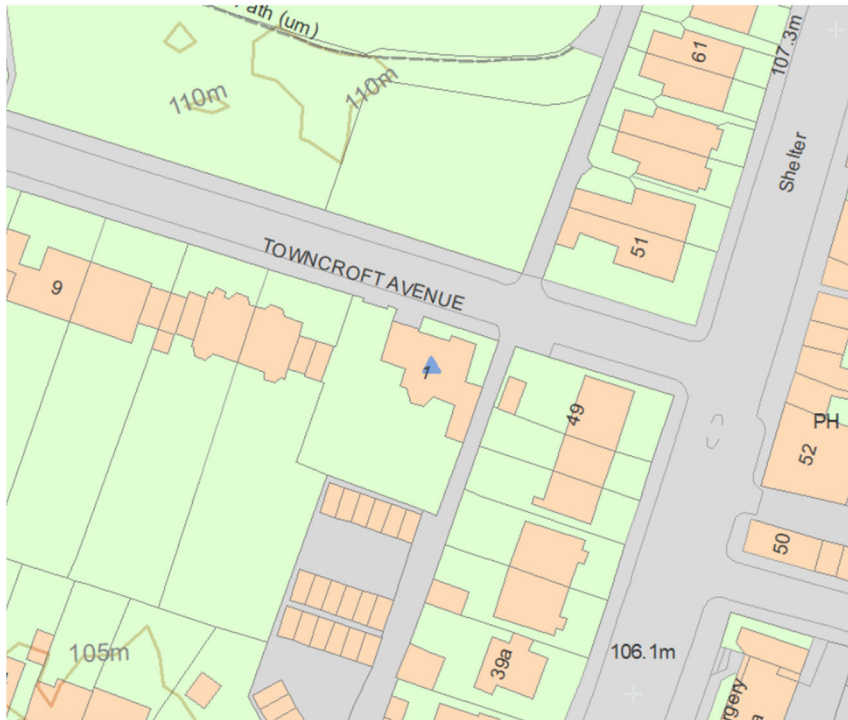
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: **503613**

Legacy System: **LBS**

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



End of official list entry

Appendix 8: Hillcrest and Briarhall List Entry

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: II

List Entry Number: **1447739**

Date first listed: **05-Sep-2017**

List Entry Name: **Hillcrest and Briarhill**

Statutory Address 1: **37 Rochdale Road, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 2PT**

Statutory Address 2: **39 Rochdale Road, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 2PT**

Location

Statutory Address: **37 Rochdale Road, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 2PT**

Statutory Address: **39 Rochdale Road, Middleton, Rochdale, M24 2PT**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: **Rochdale (Metropolitan Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **SD8707606643**

Summary

A semi-detached pair of houses of 1892 by internationally-renowned architect Edgar Wood, in red brick with slate roofs and with highly individual and innovative design including elements found in the earliest Art Nouveau houses in the world.

Reasons for Designation

Hillcrest and Briarhill, a semi-detached pair of houses of 1892 by Edgar Wood, are listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest: * As an excellent example of innovative design for the period, sharing many characteristics with the most avant-garde designs of the time in continental Europe and anticipating elements of the architect's later pioneering Modernist design;

* For the good survival of the internal plan-form and retention of many interior decorative features, particularly at Briarhill;

* For the strong visual and historical relationship with the adjacent pair of Redcroft and Fencegate (NHLE no. 1162377) by the same designer (who lived in Redcroft until 1916), and close proximity and shared features with two of Wood's other listed buildings at 51-53 Rochdale Road (NHLE no. 1356254), and Arkholme (NHLE no. 1391983);

Historical interest: * For their attribution to the internationally-renowned architect Edgar Wood.

History

Hillcrest and Briarhill (Nos 37 and 39 Rochdale Road, respectively) were built in 1892, the year after the adjacent Redcroft and Fencegate (NHLE no. 1162377); the architect, Edgar Wood, lived in Redcroft until 1916. With their Art Nouveau features Hillcrest & Briarhill are among the earliest such designs in the world, fractionally predating Victor Horta's Hotel Tassel in Brussels (UNESCO World Heritage List). In 1893, Hillcrest and Briarhill were illustrated and described in architectural publications in Britain, the USA and Europe.

Hillcrest's first owner, Henry Simpson Batey, lived there until his death in 1937. In the late C20 it became the White House Hotel. In the early C21 it underwent substantial renovation. The hotel ceased trading early in the C21 and is presently (2017) unoccupied. After a short occupancy by Arthur Edwin Jones, Briarhill was lived in by Thomas Mills Chadwick, and later two of his daughters, from around 1900 until 1960. It is still a family home.

The first map on which the houses are marked is the 1909 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map. This shows the L-shaped ancillary building in the rear garden of Briarhill, continuing (as a linear range only) in the garden of Hillcrest, where its southern end is aligned with a wall running from the rear of the house. A similar cross-wall divided the front garden into a small northern portion and a larger southern one. The northern boundary of Briarhill's garden lay further to the north than at present, with a second ancillary building in the north-west angle, linked to the north-west corner of the house by a short wall dividing the front garden from the rear. A small rear porch is shown to Briarhill only. The 1922 edition shows the same arrangement, with the addition of a wall at Hillcrest dividing front from rear gardens, just forward of halfway along the end wall. The 1955 1:1250 map does not mark the rear porch or any of the garden dividing walls. Maps of 1960 and 1970 show the same.

Externally, both houses have had nearly all of their sash windows replaced with casements (in PVC at Hillcrest and timber at Briarhill). Sadly, at Briarhill, this removed the bulk of what might have been the first comprehensive Art Nouveau glazing scheme in the world, in which the upper sashes of the front windows had sinuous glazing bars and upper lights filled with leaded and coloured glass in a stylised representations of briars. Large timber gates have been replaced by slender modern metal versions, and the railings within the boundary wall cut-outs are not original. All of the rainwater goods and their ornamental fixings have been repainted in alternatives to their original white colour, and some replaced in PVC. The site has varying ground conditions, and measures to combat differential movement were integrated during the build, probably because movement began to occur almost immediately. Numerous ties run through the building, with decorative pattress plates on the elevations.

Hillcrest has had major internal works including some drylining and tiling, and has lost most, but not all, of its interior features. A small area of surviving painted plaster shows it originally had a sophisticated Art Nouveau painted scheme. A recess on the back wall of the dining room (probably originally with a serving hatch) is now knocked through to the kitchen. Externally, the two tall end chimneys were lowered in 2008 to the level of the roof and slated over. The Hillcrest entrance Art Nouveau stone panel has been covered over, but remains intact. The rear wall of the house and the garden walls have been rendered.

Briarhill's chimneys are only partly lowered. Several original internal doors have been boarded with hardboard and some fireplaces have been removed. Interior pine woodwork, originally transparent-varnished, has been painted or stained in darker colours. In the

morning/withdrawing room the chimney breast of the semi-inglenook fireplace has been removed, and as with Hillcrest, the recess on the back wall of the dining room is now knocked through to the kitchen. The original plaster at Briarhill appears to have survived beneath subsequent wallpaper, and it is believed that a similar painted colour scheme to that of Hillcrest survives much more intact here.

Edgar Wood (1860–1935) was born and educated in Middleton, Lancashire. After qualifying as an architect in 1885, he established a practice in Middleton and then subsequently at Oldham and Manchester. Pevsner described him as the most progressive of all Edwardian architects whose designs were at the cutting edge of European contemporary architecture, and he gained a considerable national and international reputation, notably in Germany. A highly individualistic architect, he is internationally recognised as a pioneer of Modernism, his style developing through the idiosyncratic application of vernacular features, Arts and Crafts design, and an Art Nouveau style largely independent of continental influence. He is noted for his use of broad surfaces making use of colour, texture and massing rather than applied ornament for visual interest, but this is the only known example of his work where this is achieved in bright red brick. His designs, with individualistic and efficient internal plans influencing the overall form of the building, were unconventional at the time. During his career, Wood designed many highly-regarded buildings; more than 45 are currently listed, seven at Grade II* and three at Grade I.

Details

A pair of semi-detached houses of 1892, by Edgar Wood.

MATERIALS: Ruabon brick and terracotta, red brick, stone, Welsh and Westmorland slate.

PLAN: a rectilinear range aligned roughly north–south, with central cross-wing.

EXTERIOR: standing to the west of Rochdale Road and immediately to the north of the pair ‘Redcroft and Fencegate’ (Nos. 33 and 35 Rochdale Road) and a short distance to the south of ‘The Studio’ and Nos. 51 and 53 Rochdale Road, all by the same architect and all listed.

The front faces east to the road and comprises a central three-storey cross-wing, with a block of two storeys plus an attic to each side. The walling is in orange Ruabon brick and terracotta (some painted), the roofing in five different colours of Welsh and Westmorland slate, laid randomly and with blue clay crested ridging including occasional decorative finials. Unless otherwise stated, windows are modern casements (in PVC at Hillcrest and timber at Briarhill).

The central block is gabled with a ball finial and kneelers, and has canted corners where it projects above the roofs to either side. Above this can be seen the front face of a chimney stack of Ruabon brick with a cornice and string course. The upper storey has a window in each canted face, each with two windows adjacent on the front face, with a terracotta sill-band. The first and ground floor each have two triple windows, each window having a single terracotta sill. The lintels are all slightly-projecting, splayed brick very shallow segmental arches, except for the front windows of the top floor which have flush, flat brick lintels. The central lintels of each window of the lower two floors have projecting brick ‘keystones’.

The central gable has three bands of square terracotta blocks, the lowest of which is aligned with a blind oculus with projecting

keystones at the compass points. Below the oculus, a further band runs out on either side to form the top course of a parapet, which has the same terracotta coping as the gable. Below this solid course, the parapet comprises three bands of alternating square blocks and brick panels of equal size, each band slightly offset from the one below; in the central area they are offset to the right, but on the canted corners and the side returns, offset to the left of the band below. A string course matching the coping forms the base of the parapet. Each storey has two bands of square blocks running across the windows; the brickwork is all in stretcher bond.

Each side block comprises an entrance bay with a first-floor window, and a gabled bay with a two-storey bow front with a parapet partly concealing an attic window in the gable. The entrance bays are slightly recessed and have the same detailing as the central block. The bow fronts however are in header bond, and divided into three by slender brick pilasters between the windows and at the outer edges, where they are angled. The pilasters are enlivened by sloping terracotta blocks, flush at the top and projecting at the base, which are placed just below the lintels of each storey. The parapet is coped, with capitals to each pilaster. All the lintels are flush brick with projecting terracotta keystones, and terracotta sills match the coping. The attics have Diocletian windows (original at Briarhill, with a six-light central casement). A low projecting plinth runs across the frontage. Pattress plates of three different designs are distributed symmetrically across the façade, those over the central ground-floor bow windows with characteristic Art Nouveau lines. Briarhill retains original cast-iron rainwater goods with hopper heads and some fixing plates in flowing Art Nouveau style.

The left entrance surround is concealed by white-painted render and has a projecting concrete doorcase. The right entrance (to

Briarhill) retains its original Art Nouveau character, although the surround is faced in later tiles. An exaggerated keystone is carved with lilies. Beneath this is an overlight of five lights, with a basket-arch head and flowing transom which is gently-arched in the centre. The overlight is leaded, and retains coloured tulips from the original glazing scheme. The door is part-glazed, with a three-light oval window in the upper section, three lights below this with concave heads following the curve of the window above, a transom with decorative letterbox retaining briar decoration, and three rectangular lights at the foot. Three-light sidelights reach down to transom level, where the surround steps in.

A short return at the left is in the same stretcher-bond Ruabon brickwork, changing to dark red common brick at the full height chimney breast, now slated over. Adjacent to the left of the chimney breast is an attic window. Slightly to the left of the ridge is the stair window, in a double-height opening with Ruabon brick round-arched lintel and projecting blocks in the manner of a Gibbs surround, and two lights divided by a central panel of hung slates. Below this at ground floor is an inserted window (over-boarded at the time of inspection) with a blocked basement window below, and to the left a side door inserted across a blocked former window, with concrete steps. The truncated rear chimney stack projects just inside the verge, at the left; its front (east) face has a recessed central channel, the remnant of what was originally a single tall blind arch. Four pattress plates of the same design are distributed evenly around the stair window, with one between the ground and first floor in the Ruabon section at the right, and another at the same height at the extreme left. Rising from the ridge of the central block are the south faces of two other eight-flue stacks; the right-hand (front) one of Ruabon brick and blind-arcaded with a cornice and a string course forming the imposts for the arches, and six crown pots; the left-hand one of common brick with a string course and cornice and

six crown pots.

Returning at the left again, the rear is a simplified version of the front façade. At the left the common brickwork is visible, to the right it is concealed by white-painted render. The whole wall is flush, with no canted corners to the second floor, and sloping dormers to the attic. Each house has its own small oculus window in the gable, which has projecting purlins supporting overhanging verges; the oculi each have keystones at N, E and W compass points only. A very small square chimney stack projects from the left-hand eaves of the gable, and is truncated. At the left and right verges are the truncated rear chimney stacks, each with a recessed central channel which originally had an arched head. The west face of the rear stack of the central block is the same as its south face, with string course and cornice.

Within this rear face, Briarhill is divided into four bays, with a window at ground and first floor in bays (from the left) 1 and 2, a window at first floor and an entrance with side light in bay 3, and in bay 4, two windows at each of the three floors. Sills are plain stone, all with white paint*, and the lintels are all segmental arches of Ruabon headers. The entrance has an overlight of four lights and a four-panelled door with an upper vision-light of five fanned panes. Cast-iron rainwater goods remain in place. Cellar windows are found in bays 1 and 2, with small areas and both retaining original casement windows. The rear of Hillcrest originally mirrored that of Briarhill but the ground-floor window in (from the right) bay 2 is blocked, the former entrance in bay 3 has been converted to a window, and in bay 4 one window has been lowered and the other converted to a doorway. There is also a cellar entrance in bay 1, accessed by steps from the south, and a window with an area in front of it in bay 2.

Returning to the left, the north wall of Briarhill is stylistically similar to

the south wall of Hillcrest, but with some significant differences. At the left, the chimney breast is much wider and in Ruabon brick. A narrower stack rises from eaves level, also in Ruabon brick, and continues above the verge, although it is truncated above this. The chimney breast has a parapet with terracotta copings at eaves level, which steps up adjacent to the stack. A central pilaster is also coped at eaves level, giving these steps the appearance of merlons in a crenellated parapet. An attic window mirrors that of Hillcrest, with a stone lintel and terracotta sill. Adjacent to the chimney breast, the stair window is also double-height, but the projecting blocks of the surround are of white-painted stone and continue around the arched head, with moulded imposts. The upper window is an original, horned vertical sliding sash with four panes in the upper light and a single-pane lower light, and has a moulded stone sill. Between this and the first-floor window (a replacement casement) is a panel of fish-scale slates, now painted red. The lower window has a plain stone sill. Beneath this the brickwork above the side-entrance surround is rendered and painted. The entrance has a similar surround to the stair window, with moulded imposts to the basket arch with keystone. Like the front entrance, the surround steps in at sill-level of the sidelight, with imposts at this level. The fascia over the door has carved scrolls meeting in the centre. The door has two vertically-boarded horizontal panels and an eight-light oval vision panel, and original knocker. To the right of the doorway is a slender window with arched head matching the blocked window on Hillcrest's south face, and plain stone sill. Pattress plates match those of Hillcrest's south wall.

INTERIOR: The interior to Hillcrest is largely devoid of historic features, but a small patch of decoratively-painted plaster survives, and a small area of Lincrusta wallpaper with a strapwork design incorporating fleurs-de-lys, together with some cornices (above later inserted ceiling frames), quarry-tile floors (some over-tiled),

lath-and-plaster partitions and some window architraves. The original internal plan-form, mirroring that of Briarhill, is however largely intact.

Briarhill's interior is relatively little-altered and retains several key elements of its original Art Nouveau decoration. As in Hillcrest the innovative and highly efficient plan-form remains largely intact, in which the entrance hall continues through to a rear access, crossing the foot of the stair that runs across the house. A side entrance under the stairs connects with the hall, and accesses service rooms arranged along the rear wall. Beyond the stair, the entrance hall forms a lobby which connects a secondary kitchen door to the rear entrance. The entrance hall in particular forms a set-piece in which Elizabethan and Jacobean influences are combined to create an Art Nouveau overall aesthetic. The arched ceiling matches the profile of the fanlight and is thickly decorated with plasterwork flowering plants, while the doorways have lintels with pointed upward-curving heads. The cellar door is original, with three horizontal panels, the bottom one having the same upward-curving point as the door head. The morning/drawing room retains the projecting ceiling to its ingle nook, which is individualistically decorated with slender pilasters with capitals. The bow window, which gives maximum direct sunlight in the morning, has a double arch which springs from imposts which also have upward-curving chevron-type mouldings. The stair is original and overtly vernacular in character, with a heavy newel with a delicate turned centre and a turned cylindrical finial. The moulded handrail is supported by plain posts with a mid-rail, and unmoulded chunky scrolls run beneath the handrail to the posts. Pendants and embedded half-finials match the newel. Modern kitchen fittings have been inserted in the former rear lobby. The original kitchen retains its original cast-iron cooking range faced with rich ceramic tiles.

Elsewhere including the upper floors the interior retains many features of interest including the majority of the good-quality internal timber door and window surrounds, skirtings and ceilings, covings and mouldings, original doors (some with later over-boarding), and at least two original fireplaces. Archaeological survey indicates that the original plaster remains, and given the high likelihood that this house had a similar painted colour scheme to that of Hillcrest, this is likely to survive much more intact beneath the subsequent wallpaper. The cellar also retains some original flooring, fire surrounds and windows.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: the original boundary walls survive on the south and east and between the front gardens, along with the gate piers at Hillcrest. The eastern boundary wall has a stone plinth and bands separated by brickwork, and moulded terracotta coping. It is deeply scalloped, with non-original iron railings* in the concavities. The gate piers to Hillcrest have stone caps carved with lilies matching the entrance keystone, and terracotta finials. The gates* are modern replacements.

The original ancillary buildings in the rear gardens have been heavily altered. Modern gates and shutters* have been installed in the western boundary on modern piers*.

*Pursuant to s1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') it is declared that the aforementioned items are not of special architectural or historic interest.

Sources

Websites

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: 'Wood, Edgar', accessed 12/06/17 from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/61675>

Other

Archaeological building recording survey by Archaeological Research Services Ltd, April 2016, ARS report No. 2016/49, OASIS no. archaeol5-247877

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

The listed buildings are shown coloured blue on the attached map. Pursuant to s.1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'), structures attached to or within the curtilage of the listed buildings (save those coloured blue on the map) are not to be treated as part of the listed buildings for the purposes of the Act.



End of official list entry

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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