

**PROPOSED ERECTION OF 5 DETACHED
UNITS AT**

**LAND SOUTH
OF CHURCH
AVENUE,
MIDDLETON,
M24 2UA.**

**HERITAGE
STATEMENT**

Heritage Statement

Site: Properties along Church Avenue, Middleton, Greater Manchester M24 2UA

Date: June 2025

Prepared for: JC Brennan Developments Ltd

1. Location & Context

- Situated in the Castleton electoral ward of Middleton, part of the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale. Church Avenue lies approximately one mile north-west of Middleton town centre, at an elevation of about 140 m above sea level
- M24 2UA is a residential area of semi-detached domestic housing, with property values historically averaging around £166,000

2. Heritage Significance of the Area

- Middleton features a “Golden Cluster” of heritage assets—including its Grade I listed medieval Church of St Leonard and several Grade II* and Grade II listed structures—highlighting outstanding architectural and historic interest
- St Leonard’s Church (M24 6DJ), dating back to circa 1100 and largely rebuilt in 1412 (with further enlargement in 1524), is the anchor of this heritage ensemble. Its distinguishing features include Norman arches, a weather-boarded tower stage, rare monumental brasses, and the Flodden stained-glass memorial window dating to around 1515—the oldest known war-memorial window in the UK
- Middleton’s later heritage assets include Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau buildings by Edgar Wood (notably the Long Street Methodist Church), Tudor-period public houses like Ye Olde Boar’s Head (c. 1632), and civic and educational structures from the 19th and early 20th centuries

3. Assessment of Church Avenue

- **Designation Status:** Properties on Church Avenue are in an immediate heritage setting due to St Leonard’s proximity (approx. 1 km away). While none are individually listed, the street contributes to the wider historic townscape.
- **Architectural Character:** Typical late-20th-century suburban semi-detached houses, likely in council tax Bands B–C, offering domestic character aligned with post-war suburban development
- **Heritage Impact Potential:** Though not statutorily protected, Church Avenue forms part of a sensitive buffer zone around Middleton’s core heritage assets. Any proposed development or alteration should consider visual and functional relationships with landmark buildings, notably sightlines toward St Leonard’s spire/tower and ambient characteristics (scale, materials, greenery).

4. Heritage Policies & Guidance

- Local and national planning guidance protects heritage assets and their settings, even if surrounding buildings are unlisted. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires special consideration of the setting and significance of designated heritage assets (e.g., Grade I, II*).
- Historic England guidance emphasises that the setting of landmark buildings includes key suburban approaches and viewpoints—such as streets like Church Avenue.

5. Recommendations

- **Conservation-Led Approach:** Any changes on Church Avenue (extensions, new buildings, felling of trees) should be sympathetic to the area's role as a backdrop to Middleton's heritage core. Use traditional materials and modest scales.
- **Visual Impact Study:** Commission simple photomontages or mapping to evaluate potential impacts on the view of St Leonard's Church and the Golden Cluster ensemble.
- **Streetscape Enhancements:** Where possible, enhance trees, boundary walls or hedging to reinforce a verdant suburban character that complements, rather than competes with, the elevated medieval townscape.
- **Community Engagement:** Engage with Rochdale council's heritage officers and potentially include Church Avenue in local trail leaflets—promoting awareness of how the street sits within Middleton's broader historic landscape.

6. Conclusion

Church Avenue lies within an area that, while not itself designated, forms part of the character defining the setting for Middleton's outstanding medieval and early modern heritage assets. Its suburban character offers a calm, complementary backdrop. Ensuring that future development is scale-appropriate and visually sensitive will help preserve the spatial and aesthetic integrity of Middleton's historic environment.
