

Architecture Unknown

Middleton Conservative Club

Planning Statement & Open Space Assessment

FINAL
February 2025



Revision Schedule

Middleton Conservative Club

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February 2025

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REVISION NOTES	

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Inspire Design and Development Ltd. have been instructed by Architecture Unknown, on behalf of their client, Mr M Suleman, to prepare a Supporting Planning Statement and Open Space Assessment to support a full planning application to Rochdale Borough Council for the change of use of the Middleton Conservative Club to a new community and events space.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement and Open Space Assessment discusses the site location and relevant planning policy context, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the *Places for Everyone* Joint Development Plan, and the Rochdale Core Strategy.
- 1.3 This Planning Statement and Open Space Assessment has been submitted along with additional supporting technical documentation and plans, which should be read in conjunction with this report.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located within Middleton Town Centre, with the property address known as 77 Long Street, Middleton, M24 6UN. The site has a total area of 0.3ha, and comprises a detached 2-storey building, a small car park to the front, and a bowling green to the rear. A small row of shops exists underneath the car park, with frontage immediately onto Long Street.
- 2.2 The site is currently accessed off Long Street, one of the primary urban routes through Middleton Town Centre. The site is located approximately 420m to the north east from the Middleton Shopping Centre, and 1.6km to the west of Mill Hill Railway Station.



Figure 1 - Existing access off Long Street.

- 2.3 The site is within Middleton Town Centre, and is surrounded by established town centre uses. According to the Rochdale Local Plan, the site is within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. While the building itself is not a listed building, it is identified by the Local Planning Authority as a *Building of Local Importance* due to its architectural features and historic interest.
- 2.4 The building is the former Conservatives Club, a former working men's club which provided recreation and education to working class men and their families. The club closed in 2012, 180-years after it first opened. Its most recent use was as the Kohinoor Banqueting Hall.
- 2.5 Recent imagery shows the building to be in disrepair, with main windows boarded up, and the ground largely unkempt. The bowling green at the rear of the building, which formed part of the recreational offering at the Club, is significantly derelict and has been disused since the club closed in 2012.



Figure 2 - Frontage of the existing building.

Planning History

2.6 The applications listed below, using the Council's online public access system, provide an overview of the planning history of the site.

- 95/D/3162 – Alterations to Existing Conservation Club to form single and two storey extension. Status: Grant with Conditions.
- 80/D11013 – Alterations and Extension to provide kitchen staircase and concert and games room extensions. (*specific details not available*).



Figure 3 - View of the Bowling Green looking North.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposed development seeks full planning permission to convert the existing Middleton Conservative Club in a new multi-use function space for events such as weddings, ceremonial gatherings, and other community events. It is proposed to carry out internal refurbishments and external renovations to the existing historic façade of the former Conservative Club.
- 3.2 A new 2-storey side extension will provide suitable access to both floors of the existing building. The extension will provide a Part K complaint staircase and a new Part M compliant lift service. The side extension will also provide a new lobby and reception area for guests.
- 3.3 A new car park is proposed to the rear of the building, which will be accessed via a ramp that will connect to the existing front car park. The new car park will provide a total of approximately 50no. parking spaces and will utilise sustainable drainage techniques to provide various biodiversity enhancements. The development will take access from the existing access off Long Street.
- 3.4 Further details of the proposed development, including layout and scale, are shown on the drawings prepared by Architecture Unknown, submitted in support with this planning application.



Figure 4 - 3D Visuals of the Proposed Development (*Architecture Unknown*).

Pre-Application Enquiry

3.5 A pre-application enquiry was made to Rochdale Borough Council regarding the proposed development. The enquiry was given the reference PREAPP/00090/23, and a response was received on 20th May 2024. The response can be summarised as follows:

- The site is within the defined urban area and Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. It is also designated as being within the Town Centre. Trees on the site are protected under the site's designation as being within the Conservation Area.
- New development affecting Conservation Areas will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The principle of the development would bring this important building back into viable use. However, the development would result in the loss of the existing bowling green which may cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset as well as the wider Conservation Area. A robust justification is required to demonstrate mitigation of the perceived harm.
- The proposed development should provide details of a sustainable drainage system such as permeable paving or a soakaway system at full application stage.
- A transport study should be prepared in support of the proposed development, including an assessment of the proposed development against the relevant parking standards. At this stage, the Local Highway Authority do not perceive any highway safety issues related to the proposed development.
- A Construction Management Plan should be submitted in support of the proposed development to set out how the development will minimise traffic and noise during the construction period.
- Additional details should be provided for the proposed ramp and rear car park, including further elevation and design details for the proposed extension.
- An Open Space Assessment should be prepared to assess the loss of the bowling green in accordance with Paragraph 104 of the NPPF (February 2025) and Policy G/3 of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

Rochdale Core Strategy

- 4.1 The Rochdale Core Strategy was adopted on 19th October 2016 and is the lead document in the Borough's Local Plan. The Core Strategy sets out the long-term strategic policies for Rochdale Borough's future development and forms the framework in which planning applications will be assessed against.
- 4.2 In accordance with Planning Law, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, the most relevant Core Strategy policies are:
- DM1 – General Development Requirements
 - SD1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
 - P2 – Protection and Enhancing Character, Landscape, and Heritage.
 - P3 – Improving Design of New Development.
 - C6 – Improving Health and Wellbeing.
 - T2 – Improving Accessibility.
 - E1 – Establishing Thriving Town, District and Local Centres.
 - E3 – Focusing on Economic Growth Corridors and Areas
- 4.3 The overarching policy for this development is considered to Policy E1/M.

Core Strategy Policy E1/M – Establishing Middleton as a Thriving Town Centre

In Middleton Town Centre, we will support its development to meet the primary needs of its local catchment population, recognising the strong influence of Manchester versus the potential of Rochdale. We will:

- *Deliver additional convenience and comparison retail in the town centre subject to identified need set out in the Retail Study.*
- *Support and develop the proposals set out in the Middleton Town Centre Spatial Masterplan for the redevelopment, refurbishment, and improvement to the centre and its public realm.*
- *Utilise opportunities from investments at the Arena and the new superstore to improve the image of the centre.*
- *Support delivery of office and commercial space in the eastern part of the town centre around the Arena.*
- *Strengthen and improve the attractiveness of pedestrian links to, and the use of Middleton Gardens.*

- *Improve links with the Middleton Conservation Area and promote its potential as a visitor attraction based on an Edgar Wood Trail, the Park, Middleton Parish Church, and the Old Grammar School.*
- *Strengthen pedestrian links along Long Street between the town centre and Assheton Way to allow safe pedestrian movement between Middleton Shopping Centre, Bus Station, and the Arena Leisure Centre and the neighbouring areas.*

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan

4.4 *Places for Everyone* is the Strategic Spatial Plan which sets a planning policy framework for the nine boroughs of Greater Manchester. All policies within the Joint Development Plan are *Strategic Policies* which shape housing delivery, economic growth, and environmental sustainability across Greater Manchester. The Joint Development Plan forms part of the respective Development Plan for each of the nine boroughs and should be read alongside each respective Local Plan and, where appropriate, Neighbourhood Plan.

4.5 The six objectives of *Places for Everyone* are:

- Delivering New Homes and Jobs.
- Protecting the Environment.
- Addressing Climate Change.
- Improving Transport and Connectivity.
- Reducing Inequality.
- Urban and Suburban Growth.

4.6 In addition to the identified Rochdale Core Strategy policies, the following *Places for Everyone* policies are also considered to be relevant to the proposed development:

- JP-S1 – Sustainable Development
- JP-J1 – Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth
- JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
- JP-P2 – Heritage
- JP-P4 – New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres.

Middleton Town Centre Masterplan 2022

4.7 The Middleton Town Centre Masterplan provides a framework for placemaking and regeneration in order to identify and maximise the present and future opportunities for the town. The Masterplan capitalises on the existing assets within Middleton and sets out a vision for the Town Centre as a vibrant and friendly place that is full of opportunity.

- 4.8 While the Masterplan does not specifically identify the site for future development, the site is identified as being within the Jubilee Hill character area. The Bowling Green, located to the rear of the Conservative Club is identified as an area for *Enhanced Green Space*; however, it has not been identified as an objective within Page 34 of the *Masterplan Vision*. This will be explored further within the *Open Space Assessment* in Section 5 of this report.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2025

- 4.9 Central to the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 of the Framework sets out the overarching goal of the planning system, which is to achieve sustainable development.
- 4.10 To achieve sustainable development, the NPPF sets out three objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supporting ways in order to secure net gains across each objective:
- An Economic Objective – to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, and sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, and improved productivity, and by identifying and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure.
 - A Social Objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of home can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
 - An Environmental Objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built, and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 4.11 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF explains that these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the NPPF; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but should also take local circumstances in account, in order to reflect the character, needs, and opportunities of each area.

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- 4.12 Paragraph 90 of the NPPF sets out how planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management, and adaptation.
- 4.13 Paragraph 98 of the NPPF states that in order to provide the social, recreational, and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, and cultural venues) in order to enhance the sustainability of communities.
- 4.14 Paragraph 210 of the NPPF states that when determining applications affecting heritage assets, Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. The decision-maker should also consider the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality.
- 4.15 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impact would be severe following mitigation and taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

5.0 OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

5.1 This section of the report constitutes the Open Space Assessment which was requested by the Local Planning Authority during the Pre-Application enquiry.

5.2 The pre-application response stated that:

The proposal includes the loss of the bowling green and the associated building. This is existing open space. [...]

In the absence of a robust and up-to-date assessment by the Council, an application for planning permission may seek to demonstrate through an independent assessment that the land and buildings to meet (a) above [Paragraph 104 of the NPPF 2025]. Any assessment will be expected to take into account local sporting and recreational needs and demand, fitness for purpose including consideration of all alternative recreational uses and should demonstrate that the community is supportive of the proposals.

5.3 While the site includes the former bowling green which directly associated with the former Middleton Conservative Club, it has not functioned in this form for over 13-years. Furthermore, the Rochdale UDP Policy Map, shows that the site's bowling green is not designated as an area of protected open space. In addition, the *Rochdale Draft Allocations Plan for Middleton Township – All Open Space* allocated land for the following protections:

- Formal Sports Pitches
- Urban Open Spaces
- Allotments
- Green Network
- Land Safeguarded for Flood Risk Management

The site and bowling green are not protected open spaces according to the Draft Allocations Plan. A copy of the Allocations Plan can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Planning Policy

5.4 Paragraph 104 of the NPPF (2025) state that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- A) An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown that the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements.

- B) The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.
- C) The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
- 5.5 Policy G/3 also sets out that development of public or private recreational open spaces for any other purpose will not be permitted unless one or more of the following exceptions applies:
- A) The development is for a non-commercial community use within a park or other outdoor recreational area, is ancillary to the recreational use of the area, would not lead to a deficiency in recreational open space in relation to present or future needs, and does not harm the recreational, townscape or nature conservation of the remaining open space.
- B) Alternative provision is made for at least the equivalent quantity and quality of recreational open space, in a satisfactory location and taking account of local environmental and traffic considerations.
- C) The development funds improvements to existing outdoor sports facilities within the site or on another site, commensurate with the open space being lost.
- D) The development comprises a built recreational facility of greater benefit to the wider community than the open space being lost and does not result in a serious deficiency in open space in the area.

Sport England Playing Fields Policy and Guidance

- 5.6 The guidance states that Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of or would prejudice the use of land allocated for playing field use unless the development meets one or more of the five specific exceptions. These include a local excess of playing field provision, and replacement with equivalent or better provision, replacement of a playing field elsewhere, or where the land subject to the planning application is incapable of forming part of a playing pitch.
- 5.7 Page 6 of the Sport England Guidance confirms which form of playing field related applications they need to be consulted on. This is limited to proposals which are likely to prejudice the use, or lead to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field, such as:
- Land which has been used as a playing field over the last five years.
 - Is allocated for use as a playing field.

- Involves replacement of the grass surface of a playing field with an artificial surface.

Assessment

- 5.8 Having set out the various tests required by the policy; these will now be reviewed in relation to the proposed development site.
- 5.9 National policy states that existing open space, sports and recreation land should not be built on unless at least one of the three tests are met. The first test is that space is shown to be surplus to requirements. The site has not been a functioning bowling green since the former Conservative Club closed in 2012. Since then, the bowling green has laid disused and become overgrown. It is clear that there has been little interest in reviving the site's use as a bowling green over the 13-year period between the closure of the Conservative Club and the submission of this planning application. The *Rochdale Playing Pitch Strategy 2016-2026* does not officially assess the requirements of bowling greens within the Borough. However, it notes that a total of 24 publicly owned bowling greens and 16 privately owned bowling greens are located within the Borough.
- 5.10 Sport England's *Active Lives* survey also noted that the numbers participating in this lawn bowls have been declining for a number of years. The survey notes that as participation declined, many bowling greens became disused or underutilised, which has led to closures of many private clubs, and repurposing to other uses such as for housing or community developments. While Sport England generally supports the protection of sports facilities, it recognises that where participation is low or no longer viable, redevelopment may be appropriate if the site can meet other community needs (such as housing, community spaces, etc.).
- 5.11 As such, it is considered that given this lack of interest to repurpose the site for use as a bowling green post closure of the club, and both Rochdale Borough Council and Sport England's own research into lawn bowls' declining participant numbers, the site can be considered surplus to open space requirements, and it is clear that redevelopment could be more appropriate and beneficial for use of the site.
- 5.12 Upon review of Policy G/3 of the Rochdale Local Plan, private recreational open space will not be developed for any other purposes unless it can be demonstrated that the development is for a recreational facility of greater benefit to the wider community than the open space being lost. The proposed development will enable the re-use of the existing Conservative Club building, bringing a non-designated heritage asset back into viable use, thus securing the long-term sustainability of a community-valued building

- within the context of Middleton Town Centre. The development proposals will allow the building to be used for many community and cultural events, maintaining and enhancing the social and cultural well-being of the community of Middleton and the Borough.
- 5.13 The site in its current state has very limited social and cultural value due to its derelict nature, with the bowling green currently disused and overgrown. The building itself has no viable use and is currently in disrepair. Development of the site will allow for the existing derelict bowling green to be repurposed as part of the new community and cultural offering of the building. While the proposals are for the bowling green to become a car park, the applicant proposes that this future car park will provide additional ecological and biodiversity benefits through the inclusion of soft landscaped areas to make a feature of nature and water. Surface water from the car park will be collected using state-of-the-art sustainable drainage techniques such as swales, raingardens, and permeable surfacing. The building itself will look to make use of rainwater harvesting, making use of 'grey water' for reuse on site.
- 5.14 Consequently, the bowling green's repurposing as part of the wider community use, including the additional ecological and biodiversity enhancements, and enabling the repurposing of a non-designated heritage asset, its redevelopment as part of the wider site will significantly outweigh any perceived loss for sports and recreation, which has been identified to in declining demand.
- 5.15 While the site is identified as being *Enhanced Green Space* within the Middleton Town Masterplan, it has not been identified for any specific enhancement project unlike other Open Space projects such as that identified at Market Place and Jubilee Park. The former Conservative Club has also been identified as a *building to be brought into use/regenerated*. This proposed development will deliver the aims of the Middleton Town Centre Masterplan to enable the Conservative Club to be brought back into use and regenerate the existing derelict bowling green to provide ecological and biodiversity enhancements.
- 5.16 Sport England state that the loss of any land will be opposed where it would prejudice the use of land allocated for playing field use. The land is not allocated within the Rochdale UDP Policy Maps, The Middleton Town Masterplan, or the *Rochdale Draft Allocations Plan Middleton Township – All Open Spaces* as an allocated playing field, nor has the land been used as playing field within the last five-years. As such, it is considered that this development would not prejudice the use of land allocated for playing field use.

5.17 Overall, it has been demonstrated that the site does not form part of an allocated playing pitch, or wider Public Open Space, and that its alternative use will significantly outweigh any perceived loss of the derelict and unused bowling green. The proposed development will provide significant cultural and social benefits by bringing a local non-designated heritage asset back into viable use, aligning with the broad objectives of the Middleton Town Centre Masterplan. It is therefore considered that policy has been satisfied in this regard.

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 This section considers the key issues that are relevant to the application:

- Principle of the development.
- Design and Amenity.
- Highways and Transport.
- Flood Risk and Drainage.
- Trees and Ecology.

Principle of the Development

6.2 The development site is located within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation area and is identified within the Middleton Town Centre Masterplan as a *building to be brought into use/regenerated*. The proposed development will allow for the former Conservative Club and Banqueting Hall to be brought back into a viable and sustainable use as a community and cultural event venue within Middleton Town Centre; meeting the objectives set out within the Middleton Town Centre Masterplan, and policies SD1, P2 and G/3 of the Rochdale Core Strategy, and policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone JLP.

Loss of Open Space

6.3 Section 5 of this report includes the Open Space Assessment in relation to the wider site, which includes the area previously used as a Bowling Green. The Open Space Assessment considers the development proposals against Paragraph 104 of the NPPF and Policy G/3 of the Rochdale UDP. As stated within this section, the NPPF states that open space, sports and recreation land should not be built on unless it meets at least one of the three tests set out within Paragraph 104 of the Framework.

6.4 The Open Space Assessment considers the first test; that the site is surplus to requirements. The former Conservative Club closed in 2012, and since then the bowling green has laid disused and become overgrown. In the 13-year period between the Club's closure, and the submission of this planning application, there is no evidence to suggest any interest in reviving the disused bowling green. The Rochdale *Playing Pitch Strategy*, while out of date, does not officially assess the requirements of bowling greens within the Borough. Furthermore, Sport England's own data noted that numbers participating in lawn bowls has been in decline, noting the closure of many private bowling greens, which are being repurposed for housing or community developments.

- 6.5 As such, the Open Space Assessment concluded that given this identified lack of interest to reuse the site for lawn bowls, and Rochdale Borough Council and Sport England's own research, the site is considered to be surplus to requirements, and it is clear that the re-development of the site would be a more appropriate and beneficial use of the site.
- 6.6 The site also meets the policy test of having limited social and cultural value in its current derelict state. Subsequently, it is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental loss to existing sports infrastructure due to the lack of interest in reviving the site's use for lawn bowls over the last 13-years. Consequently, it is considered that the development accords with Policy G/3 of the Rochdale UDP and Paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

Land Use

- 6.7 The proposed development seeks to use the building as a community and cultural events venue such as for weddings and other large gatherings. The existing building was originally used for the Middleton Conservative Club, which provided a similar community facility for large community gatherings and cultural events. Post-closure of the club, the site was then the Kohinoor Banqueting Hall, again used for large cultural events. The proposed development's land use is therefore considered to be similar to the previous land uses which have been present for decades.
- 6.8 While the disused bowling green will be converted into a new car parking facility to serve the venue, this change is considered to provide the land with a beneficial use to provide off-street parking to serve the community and events venue. The car park will be surfaced in permeable material which will include permeable paving and a new state-of-the-art sustainable drainage system which will seek to make a feature of the space with the movement of water through the outdoor car park and provide ecological and biodiversity enhancements.
- 6.9 The proposed development will bring an existing community and historic building back into viable use, securing the long-term sustainability of the non-designated heritage asset within Middleton Town Centre. This development will also create approximately 20no. new jobs consisting of full-time and part-time roles within the hospitality industry and contribute to the Borough's evening economy through its use as a cultural community and events centre. Therefore, the proposed development will accord with the aims of policies E1, E3, JP-S1, JP-P1, and JP-P4.

Building Extension and Car Park Need

- 6.10 The proposed side extension to the existing building is proposed to provide suitable access to both floors of the existing building, as well as a new lobby and reception area for guests. It will also provide a Part K compliant staircase and new Part M compliant left service, in order to provide full inclusive access to the building. The design of this extension building is described further below; however, the extension will be sympathetic to the existing building, providing a modern take on renowned local architect Edgar Wood. Therefore, the design of the side extension is considered to be compliant with policies DM1, SD1, P2, P3, and T2.
- 6.11 To assess the requirement for additional parking space, Appendix 5 of the Rochdale Core Strategy includes the *Schedule of Parking Standards* for new development. While the site does not fall into a specific category, it is considered to be an *Assembly and Leisure* use. It was therefore determined, as outlined by the Transport Statement (doc ref: AU-1817-01-TS-001) that *Conference Centre* use would be the most appropriate. According to information from the applicant, the proposed development will have a maximum capacity of around 350 people at any one time. As such, a total of 58 parking spaces would be required to facilitate the development. At present, 15no. parking spaces are available at the front of the former Conservative Club. A further 5no. spaces are location to the north of the site. However, in order to accommodate new parking, these 5no. spaces will be removed to facilitate both the proposed side extension and a new ramp structure which will provide access to the former bowling green. The former bowling green will therefore provide a further 38 parking spaces to serve the new development, providing a total of 53no. parking spaces. This area will also facilitate a new drop-off/pick-up reception area for those travelling by private hire or car-sharing.
- 6.12 Taking all this information into account, it is considered that the principle of bringing a vacant and disused non-designated heritage asset back into a sustainable and viable use is considered to be acceptable. The proposed development has also demonstrated a need for additional parking which will be provided through re-purposing the former derelict bowling green into a sustainably design parking and drop-off area which will also provide a high-quality outdoor space which includes sustainable drainage features and ecological enhancements. Consequently, it is considered that the benefits of bringing this building back into use, and the social and economic benefits of the development would significantly outweigh the loss of the disused bowling green which has been identified as being surplus to requirements. As such, the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle and meets the overall aims of the

Middleton Town Centre Masterplan to bring buildings back to life through creative re-use and enhancements.

Design and Amenity

- 6.13 The proposed development does not seek to make any significant additions or changes to the façade of the existing building. Rather, the proposals seek to enhance the existing character of the building by adding to the front and rear elevations. The proposed side extension will be no more than 2-storeys in height, comparable to the existing building, and seeks to take design cues from the wider Middleton Conservation Area, and a modern interpretation of the renowned architect Edgar Wood. The primary purpose of the contemporary side extension is to enhance the accessibility and circulation of building for use as a community and cultural events venue.
- 6.14 To assist in the determination of this planning application, elevations and street scene drawings have been prepared by Architecture Unknown. The proposed side extension will be finished in traditional red-brick, in-keeping with the existing building, and many other buildings within the Middleton Conservation Area. The extension will be set back from the existing building in order to minimise visual intrusion from Long Street. The extension will seek to make use of sustainable design techniques to create a bright and welcoming environment, making use of well-proportioned windows and openings which will enhance the existing streetscape.
- 6.15 As the proposed development will make use of sustainable design techniques, with the side extension designed to be subservient to the existing feature building, it is considered that the proposed development will accord with policies DM1, DS1, P2, P3, and JP-S1 and JP-P1 of the *Places for Everyone* JLP.
- 6.16 The pre-application advice also identified that the proposed development must be compatible with surrounding land uses. The proposed development seeks to re-introduce the former Conservative Club and Banqueting Hall for use as a community and cultural events venue within Middleton Town Centre. It is considered that this use is within what would be considered as *Town Centre Use* and is therefore appropriate within this location, as set out within policy E1 and JP-P4.
- 6.17 To minimise disruption and maintain residential amenity within this location, a Framework Construction Management Plan (doc ref: AU-1817-01-CMP-001) has been prepared to set out how the development will manage the construction phase to ensure

minimal impact on surrounding occupiers and businesses during the construction period.

Highways and Transport

- 6.18 Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impact on the road network would be severe in all tested scenarios.
- 6.19 A full Transport Statement (doc ref: AU-1817-01-TS-001). This Statement assess the proposed development trip generation, providing a trip comparison exercise with the extant use as a Banqueting Hall and Social Club. In accordance with policy T2, the proposed development site is located within the established Middleton Town Centre and therefore is well connected to public transport services and active travel networks. As such, the development accords with Paragraph 109 of the NPPF, which requires development to consider opportunities to encourage public transport and active travel modes.
- 6.20 Pedestrian and vehicular access is proposed via the existing access off Long Street, shown in figure 1 of this report. The drawing AU-1817-01-HW-001 *Access Arrangements and Movement Strategy* shows how the development will safely operate managing vehicle movements through the site. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m are shown at the site access.
- 6.21 The proposed development will provide 58no. parking spaces to serve the development, as required by Appendix 5 of the Rochdale Core Strategy. The site's town centre location, and access to various public transport services which will assist in reducing the overall reliance on car journeys. As such, the minor under-provision is considered to be acceptable in this case.
- 6.22 Cycle parking will be provided in accordance with Appendix 5 of the Rochdale Core Strategy. A total of 15no. bicycle parking spaces will be provided within a secure and sheltered storage area within the site in order to encourage active travel where practicable.
- 6.23 Refuse collection and deliveries will be conducted via the existing site access, as they would when the site operated as a Banqueting Hall and Social Club.

- 6.24 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the policy aims of paragraph 109 and 116 of the NPPF, and local policies T2 and JP-S1. The proposed development is not considered to be contrary to the policy statement set out in paragraph 116 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.25 The application is supported by a Sustainable Drainage Strategy prepared by Inspire Design Group (doc ref: AU-1817-01-DS-001). It identifies the nearest watercourses and sets out the findings on sewer records and geology.
- 6.26 The site is within Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability) of the Environment Agency's *Flood Map for Planning*, and as the site is under 1ha in total area, a Flood Risk Assessment is not required in accordance with the parameters set out within the NPPF. The proposed drainage system, described within the report, will utilise sustainable drainage techniques to attenuate surface water runoff to a low discharge rate, providing a 50% betterment to the existing runoff from the site, thereby reducing any potential for surface water flooding.
- 6.27 The proposed drainage system will be based on SUDS principles, especially within the proposed rear car park area. This area will include sustainable drainage features such as filter strips, raingardens, and permeable paving to convey and treat surface water, as well as provide a degree of biodiversity enhancements.
- 6.28 With regard to flood risk and drainage, therefore, the site is considered to be suitable for the proposed use, and is in accordance with policies G1, G8, DM1, and JP-S1.

Trees and Ecology

- 6.29 To assess the development's ecological impact, a Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been prepared by Weddles in support of this planning application. Paragraph 192 of the NPPF required new development to secure net gains in biodiversity. Therefore, a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has also been submitted. It is proposed that any off-site enhancements are agreed with the Local Planning Authority to achieve the uplift to meet the 10% net gain requirement.
- 6.30 The application is also supported by a full BS5837:2012 Arboricultural Assessment.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 This report has been prepared to support a planning application to Rochdale Borough Council to seek permission to change the use of former Middleton Conservative Club to a new community and cultural events space on land at 77 Long Street, Middleton, M24 6UN.
- 7.2 This Supporting Planning Statement and Open Space Assessment sets out the applicant's aims to bring a derelict and disused non-designated heritage asset back into a viable use, secure the long-term sustainability of the building. The proposed development will bring a new offering to Middleton Town Centre as a new community and cultural event venue.
- 7.3 The proposed development achieves the sustainable goals set out within the NPPF. The principle of the development has been established as being acceptable given the site's location within Middleton Town Centre, and its aims to bring a building back into use accord with the aims of the Middleton Town Centre Masterplan. The proposed development accords with the Rochdale Core Strategy policies and the *Places for Everyone* Joint Development Plan policies identified within this report.
- 7.4 An Open Space Assessment was conducted against the principles of paragraph 104 of the NPPF and policy G/3 of the Rochdale UDP. The assessment considers that the bowling green's derelict nature and the lack of any interest to re-use the bowling green for lawn bowls, and the identified decline from both Rochdale Borough Council and Sport England's own research demonstrates that the bowling green is surplus to requirements and therefore accords with paragraph 104 (a) and policy G/3 (d).
- 7.5 Re-purposing of the bowling green is required to provide 52no. additional parking spaces to facilitate the development of the existing building. A side-extension is proposed which will provide accessibility enhancements to the proposed development. The side-extension will be set back from the main building and sympathetically designed to respect the existing former Conservative Club and the surrounding streetscape of Long Street.
- 7.6 Paragraph 90 of the NPPF sets out how planning policies and decisions should support the role of that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management, and adaptation. This development will seek to re-purpose an existing derelict site and non-designated heritage asset back into a sustainable and economically viable use, securing the long-term sustainability of

Middleton Town Centre, providing up to 20no. new jobs, and contributing to the area's evening economy. The development also aligns with the policy aims of paragraph 210 of the NPPF.

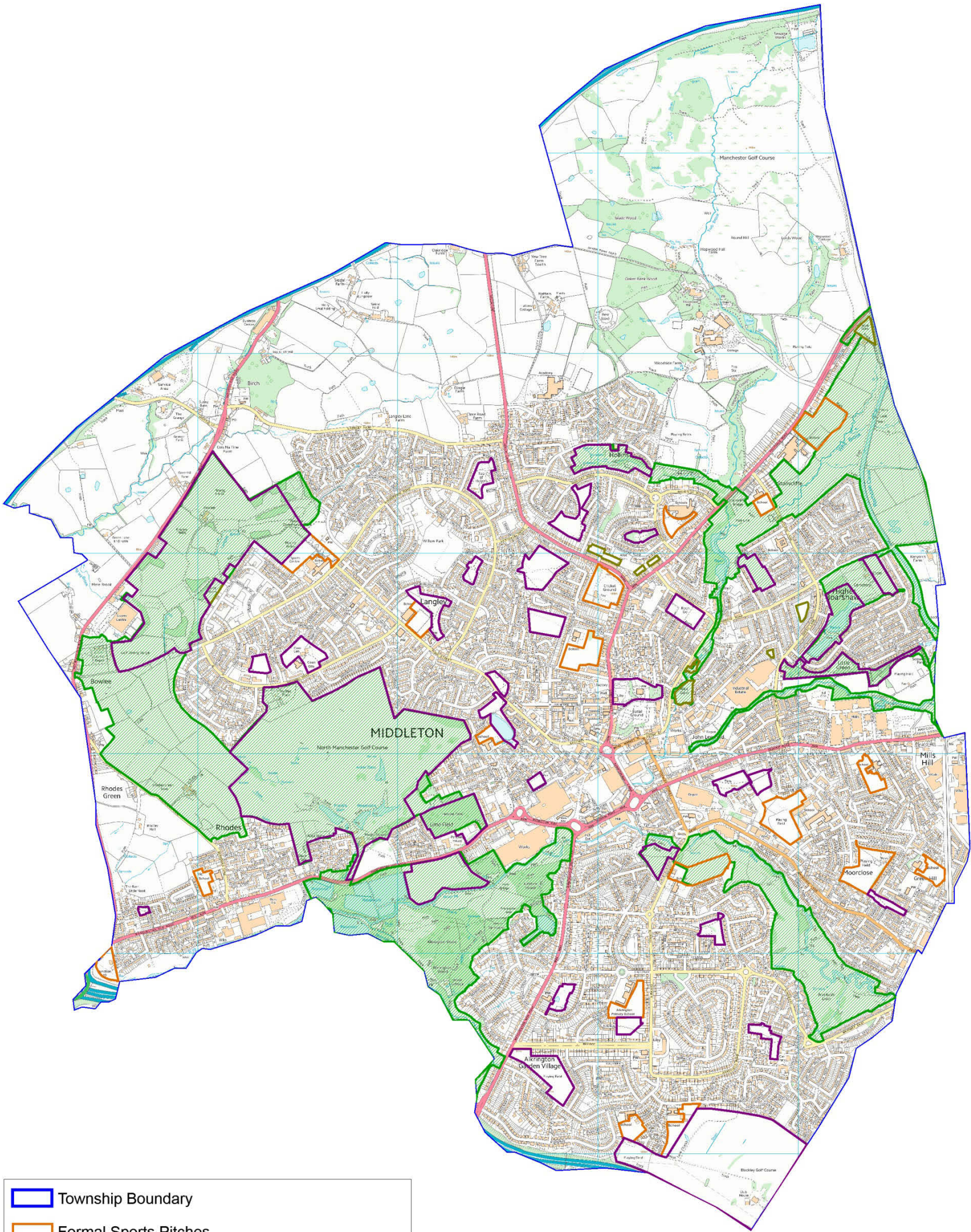
- 7.7 The site will be safely accessed in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF and policy T2 of the Core Strategy, as set out within the Transport Statement prepared by Inspire Design and Development Ltd. (doc ref AU-1817-01-TS-001). A Framework Construction Management Plan (doc ref: AU-1817-01-TS-001) has also been prepared to set out how construction traffic will be managed during the construction period of the development.
- 7.8 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the policy aims of the NPPF, Rochdale Core Strategy, and the *Places for Everyone* Joint Development Plan. It is considered that the social, economic, and cultural benefits of the proposed development significantly outweigh the perceived loss of the disused bowling green, and therefore, support for this development from the Local Planning Authority is encouraged.

APPENDIX A DRAFT OPEN SPACE ALLOCATIONS PLAN



Rochdale Borough Council Draft Allocations Plan

Middleton Township – All Open Spaces



- Township Boundary
- Formal Sports Pitches
- Local Urban Open Spaces
- Allotments
- Green Network
- Areas Safeguarded for Flood Risk Management