



Heritage Statement

Ref: DA24072 - Church St Ind Estate

Site address: 66 - 68 Rochdale Rd, Middleton, Manchester M24 2PU

Date: September 2025

Proposal: Conversion of an existing backland building to one duplex dwelling (C3) entirely within the existing envelope, with minor external works (new/regularised doors and windows; limited conservation-type rooflights if required; tidy servicing) and associated landscaping.

Designation: Within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area (statutory Section 72 duty applies). The application building is a yard-facing/backland structure at the edge of the CA, screened behind the Rochdale Road frontage and adjacent to the Church Street Industrial Estate.

1. Purpose of this statement

This Heritage Statement accompanies the current planning application and explains how the proposed duplex conversion and minor external works will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. The scope is proportionate to the scale of change and focuses on those aspects of the application building that are visible in the public realm or that influence the townscape setting of the Conservation Area.

Approach. The assessment draws on the published conservation area appraisal and mapping, site context plans, existing and proposed GA drawings for the application building, and the submitted landscaping plan. **Significance** is considered in terms of townscape role, architectural/material expression, visibility, and use/activity.

Policy frame. The analysis is undertaken having regard to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (s.72), the NPPF (heritage and design), and relevant local design/heritage policies. Compliance is summarised in Section 6.

2. Understanding of significance

2.1 Conservation Area character (narrative overview)

The Conservation Area's special interest is structured around the linear high-street grain of Long Street/Rochdale Road: small plots, buildings tight to back-of-pavement, and a prevailing domestic two-storey scale. Materials are red/brown brick with slate roofs, with select use of smooth render on principal elevations. Upper-floor windows tend to be vertically proportioned; rooflines are quiet and recessive.

Beyond the Rochdale Road frontage, the urban fabric transitions quickly to yards, service areas and light-industrial backland. In these edge conditions, visual quality is mixed: service clutter, piecemeal cladding and ad-hoc outbuildings can detract from the Area's character. Views are mostly contained within the street;



backland structures have limited public visibility, contributing to character primarily through orderliness, material tone and how well they are managed, rather than through architectural show.

2.2 The site and application building (backland block)

Location and role. The application building sits behind the Rochdale Road frontage, accessed from Church Street, and reads as part of a working yard/backland group at the Conservation Area's edge. It has negligible presence to Rochdale Road and is screened in most public views, with only oblique glimpses via access points.

Form, materials and condition. It is a simple two-storey equivalent with mezzanine in a modest, utilitarian idiom. Alterations over time (garaging, stores, service runs) have left a functional but tired appearance. Its contribution to the CA is currently neutral: it neither embodies high architectural value nor forms part of the principal street scene, but its orderliness and material treatment influence the perceived quality of the yard setting.

Significance. As a non-designated backland structure, significance lies primarily in townscape/functional value—supporting the historic plot pattern and the transition from high-street frontage to working yard. There is limited evidential/architectural value in the extant fabric. The location therefore offers scope for conservation-led uplift: tidier elevations, better-proportioned openings, and rationalised servicing, strengthening the backland setting of the CA without imposing on key views.

3. Description of proposals (heritage-relevant elements)

The project converts the application building to one duplex dwelling entirely within the existing volume—no increase in height, bulk or footprint. External works are deliberately restrained and repair-led:

Elevations.

- Regularise and replace doors and windows to create a calm, vertically proportioned pattern; frame sections to be timber or slimline aluminium, set in 75–100 mm reveals with simple cills and lintels.
- Make good brickwork with compatible mortars; remove/retire redundant fixings and services; avoid abrasive cleaning.
- Introduce privacy-respecting glazing patterns where required, ensuring a domestic rather than industrial reading.

Roofscape.

- Retain existing pitched roof form.
- Provide a limited number of conservation-type rooflights only as necessary for daylight/ventilation, set flush to the slate plane with dark frames and low-reflectivity glazing, aligned to rafter zones.

Servicing and ancillary items.



- Rationalise rainwater goods in black-finished metal; consolidate external meters/vents to secondary elevations and finish to match background.
- Provide discreet low-intensity, warm-white lighting for safe access.

Landscaping and yard order.

- Implement the submitted landscaping plan to soften the hardstanding: domestic shrub planting, lawned areas, defined pedestrian routes, and enclosed refuse/secure cycle storage positioned to reduce clutter and improve amenity for residents and neighbours.

Collectively, these measures repair, simplify and domesticate a utilitarian backland structure while keeping the quiet roofline and plot rhythm that underpin CA character.

4. Heritage impact assessment

4.1 Townscape, scale and grain

The conversion retains the existing envelope, so the backland scale and historic plot structure are preserved. From public vantage points, perceived massing is unchanged. Effect: *Preserves* character.

4.2 Elevation composition and materials

Regularised openings, repaired brick and restrained detailing replace ad-hoc alterations and visual clutter, yielding a tidier, more coherent appearance appropriate to a domestic backland setting. Effect: *Localised enhancement* of a currently neutral frontage.

4.3 Roofscape and views

The roof form is unaltered; any rooflights are conservation type and visually recessive. Given screened, backland views, wider CA vistas are unaffected. Effect: *No harm*.

4.4 Use and activity

A single duplex dwelling introduces stable residential use without generating plant, signage or servicing that would erode character. Passive surveillance and routine maintenance are likely to improve yard orderliness. Effect: *Positive*.

4.5 Cumulative heritage balance

Taken together, the proposals preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and deliver incremental enhancement by removing detracting elements and reinstating simple, well-proportioned domestic cues.

6. Policy compliance (summary)



Statutory duty (s.72 LBCA Act 1990). The scheme preserves the character and appearance of the CA by keeping established scale, grain and roof form while improving backland orderliness and material quality. NPPF. The works constitute conservation-minded repair and refinement with no identified harm and modest public-realm benefits (neater yard, reduced clutter, higher-quality detailing). Local policy. The proposals respect local materials, plot rhythm and backland character, avoid poor-quality detailing, and enhance a transitional yard setting consistent with design/heritage policies.

7. Conclusion

The application building's current role within the Conservation Area is backland and largely screened; its contribution is made through order, tone and maintenance rather than street-facing architecture. The duplex conversion and modest external works are carefully limited to tidy and regularise the building without adding bulk or visual noise. On balance, the scheme results in no harm to significance and achieves tangible, local enhancement to the yard-side setting. The proposals therefore preserve the character and appearance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area and should be supported, subject to the recommended conditions.