

HERITAGE & PLANNING STATEMENT

Land at Walker Street, Middleton, M24 4QF

1. Introduction

This Heritage and Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the redevelopment of land at Walker Street, Middleton (M24 4QF).

The application seeks permission for:

- Demolition of the existing vacant building on site
- Construction of a new two-storey, three-bedroom dwelling
- Associated car parking, private amenity space, boundary treatments and landscaping

This statement assesses the planning policy context, site characteristics, heritage considerations, and design principles underpinning the proposal.

2. Site Location and Context

The site is located on Walker Street in Middleton, within the administrative area of Rochdale, Greater Manchester.

The plot lies:

- Adjacent to No. 81 Walker Street (Little Heaton Residential Home)
- To the rear of properties on Manchester Old Road (Nos. 654 and 656)
- Within an established residential area characterised by two-storey brick-built dwellings

The surrounding townscape is suburban in nature, comprising traditional red-brick terraced and semi-detached housing, with pitched tiled roofs and modest front and rear garden areas.

The site currently contains a vacant building which is proposed to be demolished.





The site is located within an established residential area in the Rhodes area of Middleton where there is a range of urban facilities available, including schools, areas of employment, shops and eating and drinking establishments. A primary shopping area is located within 150 metres of the site.

The site also has good access to areas of both formal and informal recreational open space within the surrounding area.

3. Planning Policy Context

The proposal has been prepared with regard to:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Local Development Plan policies adopted by Rochdale Borough Council
- Relevant residential design and amenity guidance

Key planning principles considered include:

- Making effective use of previously developed land
- Achieving high-quality design
- Protecting residential amenity
- Ensuring safe access and highway safety
- Conserving heritage assets (where relevant)
- Amending the scheme based on previous refusal

4. Background

A planning application (21/01717/FUL) for a pair of semi-detached dwellings on the site was considered by the Council earlier this year. The application was withdrawn following discussions with the planning case officer to enable amendments to the scheme to be made.

A subsequent application (22/00957/FUL) was also submitted and was refused.

The refusal :

The development comprises a family dwelling which would not include a satisfactory outdoor area that could fulfil the reasonable, long-term needs of the intended future occupiers as it is significantly constrained in size and functionality. Further harm to the amenity of future occupiers has been identified where the kitchen-dining room, which would be one of the most intensively used rooms in the dwelling, would suffer from a wholly unsatisfactory level of outlook by reason of the placement of boundary treatments in close proximity to facing windows, and the dull and visually unstimulating design of the external amenity area that would include an unbroken expanse of hardstanding. Overall, the development would not achieve an appropriate standard of design which could provide a suitably high standard of amenity for future occupiers and therefore fails to accord with the requirements of The Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document, Policies DM1 and P3 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework

The garden size has been increased to allow for a more satisfactory outdoor area. The windows have also been increased in size to allow for natural light / outlook to habitable rooms. The materials are also softer.

2. The proposed dwelling, by reason of its siting and scale, would be a significantly overbearing feature on the windows of habitable rooms of the adjacent Little Heaton Assisted Living Facility and would result an undue loss of light and outlook for residents and unacceptably diminish the quality of life for residents of this building. The proposals therefore fail to accord with the requirements of Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is worth noting that the windows to the side of the Little Heaton Assisted living facility are either utility room and / or storage rooms. Helpful discussions were made with the managers at Little Heaton Assisted living. None of these windows on the ground floor are habitable room windows.

5. Description of the Proposed Development

The application seeks permission for a new two-storey detached dwelling comprising:

Ground Floor:

- Open-plan kitchen/living area (approx. 35sqm)
- Hallway
- WC
- Storage

First Floor:

- Three bedrooms (including a 21sqm principal bedroom)
- Family bathroom

External Works:

- Private rear garden
- Hardstanding for off-street parking
- Designated bin storage area
- 1.8m–2.0m high boundary fencing
- 2m x 2m visibility splay

The dwelling footprint is proportionate to the plot and allows for appropriate separation distances from neighbouring properties.

Extra attention has also been made to ensure that the rear garden is appropriate for the size of the dwelling.

The proposed development is of a high-quality design and will enhance the character and appearance of the area. The storage use of the land can lead to an untidy appearance and the redevelopment of the land will improve the street scene. Other ground floor window will serve the kitchen and is set away from the boundary with the care home in order to minimise inter visibility. The rear habitable room windows are positioned so that they face their own garden space.

The relationship of the proposed dwelling with the existing dwellings to the opposite side of Walker Street has been carefully considered. There will be a separation distance of 12.2m – 12.5m between the front elevation of the new dwelling and those of the existing dwellings. Whilst this is less than the recommended distance, it is very similar to the separation distances between other terraced dwellings within the area and therefore does not appear at odds with the character of the street scene.

6. Design Principles

The design approach has been guided by the following principles:

6.1 Scale and Massing

The proposed dwelling is two storeys in height, aligning with neighbouring residential properties. The ridge and eaves heights are comparable to adjacent built form, ensuring visual cohesion.

6.2 Materials

The external materials palette includes:

- Red brickwork
- Grey Marley Modern roof tiles
- Grey PVC windows (with obscured glazing where required)
- Glazed rear doors

These materials reflect the surrounding residential context and reinforce local character.

The area around the proposed dwelling will be laid with permeable paving to create a simple, easy to maintain surface for access and amenity use. The scaling down of the proposed development to one dwelling has increased the amount of rear garden space to the rear. The absence of a front garden will not have any adverse impact on the street scene as the front elevations of many of the properties within the area, including the adjacent care home, front onto the back edge of the pavement.

6.3 Residential Amenity

The proposal has been designed to:

- Avoid unacceptable overlooking
- Prevent overshadowing of neighbouring gardens
- Maintain appropriate boundary treatments
- Provide adequate internal space standards

Private amenity space is provided to the rear, consistent with local expectations.

6.4 Highway Safety

The scheme includes:

- Off-street car parking
- Defined access
- 2m x 2m visibility splay

The development is modest in scale and will not result in a material increase in traffic generation beyond that typical of a single dwelling.

The site is well located in terms of access to public transport with a bus service in operation along Manchester Old Road. The site is a short walk from a range of local shops and services, schools, places of employment and recreational open space which will reduce the future occupants' reliance upon the use of the car for travel.

7. Impact Assessment

7.1 Character and Appearance

The development represents an appropriate infill within an established residential area. The proposed scale, materials, and detailing respect the local streetscape and will enhance the currently underutilised plot.

7.2 Heritage Impact

As no designated heritage assets are affected, and the site lies outside any Conservation Area, the proposal results in:

- No harm to designated heritage assets
- No harm to the setting of nearby heritage buildings
- Neutral to positive impact on the local townscape

The development accords with Chapter 16 of the NPPF relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

With regard to the heritage aspects of policy P2, the site is within proximity of a Grade II listed War Memorial within the grounds of All Saints Church.

The application site is not readily visible from the War Memorial, and vice versa, due to the presence of trees and a high brick wall to the boundary of the Church gardens. From Manchester Old Road the War Memorial is viewed against the backdrop of the brick rear elevation of Little Heaton Residential Care Home and within the context of the Church building and associated landscaping.

The significance of the heritage asset is high. However, due to its location in relation to the application site there will be a neutral impact on the listed structure following the development of the site. As such, the proposal is fully compliant with the provisions of Core Strategy policy P2 with regard to the conservation, preservation and enhancement of the Borough's heritage. It is noted that the Council's conservation officer did not raise objection to the development proposed within 21/01717/FUL.

7.3 Residential Amenity

Given the scale and positioning of the dwelling, and appropriate boundary fencing, the proposal will not give rise to significant adverse impacts in terms of:

- Overlooking
- Loss of light
- Overbearing impact
- Noise or disturbance

8. Sustainability

The proposal contributes to sustainable development by:

- Redeveloping previously occupied land
- Delivering a family dwelling in a sustainable urban location
- Supporting local housing supply
- Being accessible to local services and public transport routes
- The site is not located within an area identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map as being at risk from flooding and the Environment Agency flood map for planning shows the site as falling within Flood Zone 1.
- As such, the development itself is not at risk of flooding and, with the implementation of a sustainable drainage system, will not lead to an increase risk of flooding to the surrounding area.

9. Conclusion

This Heritage and Planning Statement demonstrates that:

- The site is suitable for residential redevelopment
- There are no designated heritage constraints
- The proposal respects the scale and character of the surrounding area
- Residential amenity is protected

- The development accords with national and local planning policy

The scheme represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development within Middleton and should be supported.

It is acknowledged that the Council's first preference for new housing development outside allocated areas is the use of previously developed land. The application relates to the development of a small parcel of land that has been used for general storage purposes for over ten years. Part of the land is currently occupied by a non-domestic outbuilding, again used for storage, and therefore this would fall within the category of previously developed land also.

The proposed development would make a positive contribution towards the housing stock by creating two modest sized family houses within an established residential area and sustainable location.

In view of the above, the proposed development is considered to be fully compliant with Core Strategy policies C1, C3 and P1. It is noted that the planning officer raised no concerns with regard to the principle of residential development of the site during consideration of application 21/01717/FUL.

The site in its current form is devoid of trees and vegetation and is laid with stone chippings. Although the immediate surrounding area is built up it does benefit from large areas of open space to the north west. There is also a pleasant grassed area to the south east which forms part of All Saints Church which is the setting for a Grade II listed War Memorial.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that Rochdale Borough Council grant planning permission for the proposed development at Walker Street.