



Heritage Statement – Revision 01

Ref: DA24072 - Church St Ind Estate

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

Date: (September 2025) Updated March 2026

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 (Revised) accompanies the planning application for the conversion of the existing backland building at 66–68 Rochdale Road to a single duplex dwelling (Use Class C3). It has been updated to respond to officer comments and to align with the amended drawings. It explains how the proposals—being confined to the existing envelope and comprising modest external alterations—will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area.

The statement is proportionate to the scale of change and focuses on matters relevant to heritage impact, namely: the building's backland/yard-facing position at the edge of the Conservation Area; the limited public visibility of the structure; and the retention and re-use of its legible historic elements, including the segmental arched openings, as part of a conservation-led design approach.

Approach.

The assessment is based on a review of the adopted Conservation Area Appraisal and designation mapping, together with the submitted location/block plan, existing and proposed GA drawings, and the landscaping proposals. Significance is considered in terms of townscape contribution, architectural/material expression, visibility in public views, and the way the proposed use and management will influence the setting.

Policy frame.

The assessment has been prepared with regard to Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (heritage and design), and relevant local plan policies relating to design and the historic environment. The resulting heritage balance and policy compliance are summarised in Section 6.

2. Understanding of significance

2.1 Conservation Area character



The Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area derives its special interest from the historic linear form of Long Street/Rochdale Road, expressed through fine-grained plot widths, buildings set close to the back of pavement, and a prevailing two-storey, domestic scale. The prevailing palette is robust and understated, typically red/brown brickwork under natural slate roofs, with selective use of smooth render to principal elevations. Openings are generally vertically proportioned and set within modest reveals, and the roofscape is typically quiet and recessive.

Behind the Rochdale Road frontage, the character transitions quickly into service yards and backland areas which historically supported the commercial activity of the high street. In these edge conditions, the contribution of buildings to the Conservation Area is less about architectural display and more about maintaining an orderly and coherent setting: materials that sit quietly in the background, a reduction of ad-hoc clutter, and a clear relationship between the street frontage and the working yard beyond. Public views are primarily along the street, and backland buildings tend to be experienced in limited, oblique views from access points or within the yard itself.

2.2 The site and application building

Location and role.

The application building sits to the rear of the Rochdale Road frontage and is accessed from Church Street. It forms part of a working yard/backland group at the Conservation Area's edge, adjacent to the Church Street Industrial Estate. The building is screened from Rochdale Road in most public views and is experienced largely within the yard setting and in glimpses through access routes. Its heritage sensitivity therefore relates primarily to the quality and order of the backland setting rather than to prominent frontage architecture.

Form, materials and condition.

The building is a simple utilitarian structure of approximately two-storey equivalent with mezzanine, expressed in plain brickwork beneath a pitched natural slate roof. Brickwork is predominantly laid in English Garden Wall bond, and a series of segmental arched openings survives to the principal elevation, although some bays have been infilled or altered over time (including the introduction of roller shutters and ancillary servicing). These arches are the most legible historic element of the fabric and provide clear evidence of the building's original opening pattern and hierarchy. The current condition is functional but tired, with later interventions and service clutter diluting the coherence of the elevation.

Statement of significance.

The application building is non-designated and has limited architectural distinction as a stand-alone structure; however, it holds townscape/functional significance as part of the historic plot pattern and the backland/service relationship that underpins the Conservation Area's evolution. Its principal evidential interest lies in the surviving traditional fabric—most notably the brick construction, slate roof, and the segmental arches that define the original



fenestration pattern. Given its limited public visibility, the building's contribution to the Conservation Area is chiefly through its effect on the order and appearance of the yard setting. This establishes a clear conservation-led opportunity: to reinstate the legible historic opening pattern (by re-opening the arches), remove ad-hoc elements, and achieve a quieter, more coherent domestic conversion that preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

3. Description of proposals

The proposals convert the application building to one duplex dwelling (Use Class C3) entirely within the existing envelope. There is no increase in height, bulk or footprint. The external works are deliberately modest and conservation-led, responding directly to the building's backland setting and the Conservation Officer's advice.

Elevations

The principal elevation contains a series of segmental arched openings which represent the most legible historic element of the building. The scheme therefore adopts these arches as the primary fenestration pattern. In summary:

- The existing roller shutter and infill are removed and the original opening pattern is reinstated, with each arched bay re-opened and fitted with new painted timber windows set back within the reveal (typically 75–100 mm) to provide shadow and depth.
- The arch geometry is retained and expressed externally; glazing is arranged to sit comfortably within the arched form, avoiding square-headed insertions that would dilute the original opening hierarchy.
- Where privacy is required, this is achieved through glazing specification and internal treatments (e.g. obscure panels/blinds) while retaining the full arch profile.
- No additional new openings are proposed to the principal elevation beyond the reinstated arched bays. Any unavoidable new penetrations (e.g. vents) are confined to secondary elevations and kept visually subordinate.

Fabric repair and making good

- Brickwork is repaired on a like-for-like basis using compatible, breathable mortars; localised tooth-in repairs are used where infill is removed.
- Redundant fixings, surface cabling and ad-hoc external elements are removed and the elevation is made good to a neat, coherent finish.
- Abrasive cleaning methods are avoided.

Roofscape

- The existing pitched roof form is retained.
- Any rooflights, if required for daylight/ventilation, are limited in number and will be conservation-type, flush-fitting units aligned to rafter zones, with dark frames and low-reflectivity glazing to keep the roofscape quiet and recessive.



Servicing and ancillary items.

- Rainwater goods are rationalised and specified in black metal, consistent with traditional detailing.
- External meters/vents/ducts are consolidated on secondary elevations and finished to match their background to minimise visual clutter.
- External lighting is limited to discreet, low-intensity warm-white fittings required for safe access.

Landscaping and yard order

The submitted landscaping proposals are implemented to soften hardstanding and improve the quality and order of the yard setting, including domestic planting, defined routes, and enclosed refuse and secure cycle storage positioned to minimise clutter.

Collectively, these measures reinstate the building's most legible historic feature (the arched openings), remove detracting later interventions, and deliver a coherent domestic conversion that is appropriate to a backland setting within the Conservation Area.

4. Heritage impact assessment

4.1 Townscape, scale and grain

The proposal is contained wholly within the existing envelope. There is no increase in height, bulk or footprint, and the established backland plot structure is maintained. As a result, the development does not alter the Conservation Area's spatial characteristics or its transition from street frontage to yard/backland uses. Publicly perceived massing from Rochdale Road remains unchanged due to the screened position of the building.

Effect: Preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4.2 Elevation composition and materials (including arched openings)

The Conservation Officer's principal concern was that the proposal should avoid ad-hoc new openings and instead respond to the surviving historic fabric, particularly the segmental arched bays. The amended scheme addresses this by re-opening and utilising the existing arched openings as the primary window pattern, removing the roller shutter and later infill, and reinstating a coherent hierarchy to the elevation. New painted timber frames are set back within the reveals to provide depth and shadow, and detailing is restrained so that the elevation reads as a calm, domestic conversion rather than an industrial adaptation. \n\nBy prioritising the reinstated arches and removing clutter (redundant fixings/services), the works reduce visual harm and improve legibility of the historic opening pattern. Any unavoidable secondary alterations are confined to secondary elevations and kept subordinate, ensuring the principal elevation remains disciplined and conservation-led.



Effect: Preserves the Conservation Area, with localised enhancement to the yard-side setting through reinstatement of the historic opening pattern and removal of detracting elements.

4.3 Roofscape and views

The roof form and ridge line remain unaltered. Any rooflights, where required, are specified as conservation-type, flush-fitting units with dark frames and low-reflectivity glazing, aligned to rafter zones. Given the building's screened, backland position, there is no effect on key street views or wider Conservation Area vistas.

Effect: No harm.

4.4 Use and activity

The introduction of a single duplex dwelling results in a stable residential use without signage, external plant or intensive servicing that would erode character. Day-to-day management typically associated with residential occupation (maintenance, refuse storage, lighting for safe access) is expected to improve the order and appearance of the yard setting when compared to sporadic storage/industrial uses.

Effect: Positive.

4.5 Cumulative heritage balance

Overall, the scheme results in no harm to the significance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. It preserves established scale and grain, and delivers clear, conservation-led improvements by reinstating the segmental arched openings, removing the roller shutter/infill and rationalising external clutter. The development therefore preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and provides modest enhancement to a currently neutral backland setting.

5. Policy compliance (summary)

Statutory duty (Section 72, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). The proposals have been developed with special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. By retaining the existing envelope and reinstating the most legible historic feature of the building (the segmental arches) as part of a repair-led conversion, the scheme meets the Section 72 duty.

National policy (NPPF – conserving and enhancing the historic environment / achieving well-designed places).

The NPPF requires that proposals affecting heritage assets describe their significance and demonstrate that change has been shaped to conserve that significance. The amended scheme does so: it prioritises retention and re-use of historic fabric, avoids unnecessary new openings on the principal elevation, and secures appropriate detailing (timber windows,



flush conservation rooflights, rationalised services). With no identified heritage harm and modest improvement to the backland setting, the proposal aligns with the NPPF's heritage and design objectives.

Local policy.

Local design and heritage policies seek high-quality development that respects local character, materials and established grain, particularly within conservation areas. The proposal responds positively to the backland context by reducing clutter, reinstating a coherent opening pattern, and using traditional materials and restrained detailing. It is therefore consistent with local policy aims to preserve and, where possible, enhance conservation area character and appearance.

6. Conclusion

This Revised Heritage Statement has been prepared in direct response to the Conservation Officer's consultation comments and is issued to support validation and determination of the application. It has been updated to align with the amended proposals and drawings, which now adopt a clear conservation-led approach by prioritising the retention and reinstatement of the building's legible historic fabric.

The application building is a backland structure within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area and is largely screened from Rochdale Road; its contribution to the Conservation Area is therefore experienced primarily through the quality and order of the yard-side setting rather than through prominent street-facing architecture. The revised scheme preserves the established scale and grain by remaining wholly within the existing envelope, and it removes detracting later interventions. In particular, it reinstates the original segmental arched openings as the primary fenestration pattern, removes the roller shutter/infill and makes good the brickwork using compatible repair methods. New windows are specified as painted timber set back within deep reveals, rooflights (where required) are conservation-type and flush-fitting, and external services are rationalised to secondary elevations to avoid visual clutter.

On the heritage balance, the proposals result in no harm to the significance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area and deliver modest but tangible enhancement to the backland setting through the reinstatement of the historic opening hierarchy, improved material coherence, and the removal of ad-hoc clutter. The development therefore preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and should be supported, subject to appropriate conditions securing materials and detailing.