

## DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.  
24/01003/LBCCASE OFFICER  
Bob Melling

DETERMINATION DATE 13.01.2025 EXT OF TIME 30.10.2025

Address: 1 Towncroft Avenue, Middleton, M24 5DA

**Proposal:** Conversion of existing garage into habitable living space; formation of opening between dining room and garage; removal of living room fireplace; removal of games room chimney breast; and application of cream paint to external front and side elevation doors.

|           |                            |   |                       |   |
|-----------|----------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| PUBLICITY | Weekly list expired?       | Y | Site notice expired?  | Y |
|           | Neighbour letters expired? | Y | Press Notice expired? | Y |

|            |                                                             |   |                                        |   |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------|---|
| DELEGATION | Significant departure from local plan?                      | N | Contrary to national policy?           | N |
|            | Applicant a Council Member or officer?                      | N | Contrary to previous decision?         | N |
|            | Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval? | N | Called in or Planning Panel objection? | N |

|          |                                   |   |
|----------|-----------------------------------|---|
| COMMENTS | Planning Panel comments received? | N |
|          | Neighbour comments received?      | Y |

|     |                                                  |     |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------|-----|
| EIA | Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase? | N/A |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------|-----|

|            |                                                                      |   |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| CONDITIONS | Pre-commencement conditions proposed?                                | Y |
|            | Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)? | Y |

|                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| RECOMMENDATION | GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS |
|----------------|-----------------------------|

CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 27/10/2025

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## **SITE**

The application site is 1 Towncroft Avenue. Originally named 'The Studio', it was built as a photographic studio and designed by eminent Middleton architect Edgar Wood. It is his first overtly modern design and was the first to use flat reinforced concrete roofs. Now a house known as Arkholme, it is an early example of Wood's pioneering modernism and is listed at grade II. Its significance derives from its early modernist design by Edgar Wood, its pioneering flat roofs, its rarity as a photographic studio and its virtually intact original interior and plan form. It is also of group value with nearby houses also designed by Edgar Wood and listed at grade II.

The site also lies in the northern part of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. In addition to the cluster of Edgar Wood buildings, this part of the Conservation Area is characterised by early 20<sup>th</sup> century development, set around the Middleton Cricket Ground.

## **PROPOSAL**

Listed building consent is sought for the removal of a fireplace within the existing dining room; the removal of an internal chimney breast within the existing games room; the conversion of the existing garage into habitable accommodation; the formation of an opening between the garage and the existing living room; and changing the colour of the external woodwork from red to cream.

The converted garage would be timber framed with insulated plasterboard and a skim finish internally. There would be a suspended timber floor to match the finished floor level in the dining room. Repair works would be carried out to the garage.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

### **Legislation**

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act) 1990

Section 16(2) – In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority [...] shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

### **National Guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

### **Places for Everyone (PfE):**

JP-P1 Sustainable Places  
JP-J2 Heritage

### **Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):**

#### **SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place**

- P1 Improving image
- P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
- P3 Improving design of new development

## **RELEVANT SITE HISTORY**

19/00841/DOC - Submission of details to comply with condition 3 on planning application 18/00965/LBC. Request Completed.

19/00840/DOC - Submission of details to comply with condition 3 on planning permission 19/00156/HOUS. Request Completed.

19/00156/HOUS - Erection of 2.4m high boundary fencing around rear garden, 1.875m high wall and gates to driveway, dwarf wall with iron railings, installation of astro-turf landscaping and footpath to front and repointing of building. Approved.

18/00965/LBC - Erection of 2.4m high boundary fencing around rear garden; 1.875m high wall and gates to driveway; dwarf wall with iron railings; installation of astro-turf landscaping to front garden; creation of new driveway and footpath and repointing of building. Approved.

07/D49515 - Erection Of 1.8M High Replacement Front And Side Boundary Wall And Gates. Withdrawn.

07/D9516 - Internal Alterations And Erection Of 1.8M High Wall And Gates To Front And Side Of Listed Building And Replace External Door To Store With Window. Withdrawn.

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

### Conservation And Design (16.10.2025):

The proposal has been revised with many of the most harmful elements omitted. While there would be some harm to significance from the works, this would be at the lower end of less than substantial. This should be balanced against any public benefits derived from the proposal. It is noted that the applicant has stated that they will carry out repair works to the garage and these should be secured by condition, in the event that the officer is minded to approve the applications.

### Joint Committee Of National Amenity Societies

No comments received at time of writing.

### Historic England

On the basis of this information, we do not wish to offer any comments.

### The Victorian Society (24.04.2025):

Further to this, the Council would also need to satisfy itself that the extension and chimney breast affected by this application are not original to Wood's design and therefore are not integral to the property. However, the Society warns against overdevelopment and the potential harm of needless removal of historic fabric. The removal of the mid C20th fireplace does not lie within the Society's remit.

*Officer's note: The Victorian Society also raised concerns about a replacement window, however it should be noted that this aspect has been removed from the proposals.*

### Public Protection

No objections.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

Letters of notification were sent to neighbouring properties; a site notice was placed in the vicinity of the site and a press notice was released. 18 letters of objection and 1 letter of support were received.

It is important to note that most of the objections relate to elements of the proposals that have since been removed from the plans. Furthermore, it should be noted that the revised plans are supported by a new heritage assessment prepared by a conservation and heritage specialist.

It should also be noted that The Edgar Wood Society commented on the revised proposals, with the only substantive concern being the formation of a doorway between the living room and the converted garage. This issue has been addressed by the heritage assessment and will be addressed in the following report.

## **ANALYSIS**

In accordance with sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, when making a decision on all listed building consent applications or any decision on a planning application for development that affects a listed building or its setting, a local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Paragraph 213 of the NPPF states that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 215 states that 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'

Consent is sought to convert the existing garage into habitable living space, remove a fireplace in the living room and remove an internal chimney breast within the games room. The works include the formation of an opening between the garage and dining room and changing the colour of the external doors from red to cream.

The garage is mentioned within the list description as being built in the 1950s and not being of special interest. However, it appears to be present in photographs from the 1920s and as such is likely older than the list description states. Nevertheless, it is a later addition. Subject to details of internal finishes, including the boxing out of the garage door, it is considered that this element would have a neutral impact on the significance of the heritage asset.

The current living room at the front of the property was the former photography studio and is of high significance. The proposal seeks to create an opening between this room and the garage. There is evidence of a window within the alcove that was likely bricked up at the time the garage was built. There is now a cupboard within this alcove. There would be some loss of historic fabric resulting from the formation of an opening within the alcove. However, given that the original window has been blocked up, the loss of historic fabric and subsequent harm to the significance of the listed building would be minor. Details of the new opening and making good should be required by condition. Subject to this condition, it is considered that this element of the proposal would result in a low level of less than substantial harm.

The proposal also includes the removal of one fireplace and one internal chimney breast. The fireplace to be removed is within the dining room which lies to the rear of the original studio. Previous research indicates that the chimney stack associated with the dining room fireplace was likely built in the 1950s. It is likely therefore that the fireplace within this room was installed at this time. Given its later date, there are no objections to its removal. It would have a neutral impact on the significance of the heritage asset.

The proposal also includes the removal of the internal chimney breast within the games room. The submitted heritage statement advises that the games room is a later addition. However, it is first shown on the 1922 OS map, along with the house. Previous historic building records state that this was once the service wing. It is noted that there is no external stack serving the chimney. Subject to details of the works and a scheme for making good, it is considered that any harm resulting from the removal of this element would be largely mitigated.

It is also proposed to repaint the existing external doors in cream. Historic images indicate that the doors have not always been red, and, on that basis, there is no objection to the change in colour, subject to details regarding the proposed paint being required by condition.

It is noted that the applicant has said they will carry out repairs to the garage. Subject to details of the necessary repairs, it is considered that the low level of less than substantial harm would be sufficiently outweighed by the public benefits associated with the repair work.

Subject to the addition of the relevant conditions, it is considered that the proposed works would be acceptable.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Grant subject to the following conditions:**

1. The works must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents hereby approved unless otherwise required by the conditions below:

- Location Plan. Drawing no. Sheet 1
- Proposed Elevations. Drawing no. Sheet 6. Rev C. Dated 24.10.2025
- Proposed Plans. Drawing no. Sheet 7. Rev E. Dated 24.10.2025
- Proposed Elevations. Drawing no. Sheet 10. Rev C. Dated 24.10.2025
- Demolition Plan. Date Oct 2025

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of works, and to ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

3. Prior to commencement of works, the following details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
  - A scheme for the boxing in of the existing garage door, including details of internal finishes and materials; and
  - A scheme for the removal of the fireplace within the dining room and the chimney breast within the games room, including details of making good, internal finishes and materials.

Reason: To ensure the proposed works do not detract from the historical value or character and appearance of the listed building

4. Prior to commencement of works, a schedule of repair works for the garage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with this schedule.

Reason: To ensure the proposed works deliver public benefits and do not detract from the historical value or character and appearance of the listed building

5. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, prior to any external painting works, details of the proposed paint colour and finish shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the proposed works do not detract from the historical value or character and appearance of the listed building.

Report Author Bob Melling