



Heritage Statement

Application: Removal of dilapidated garage and construction of a low-level residential dwelling

Site: Nos. 2 & 4 Schwabe Street, Middleton

Local Context: Edgar Wood & Middleton Townscape Heritage Initiative Area,

1. Significance of the Heritage Context

The site lies within the wider setting of the *Edgar Wood & Middleton Townscape Heritage Initiative*, an area recognised for its association with architect *Edgar Wood*, whose work forms an important part of Middleton's architectural identity. The conservation documents approved by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council emphasise the need to preserve the character, materials, and scale that contribute to the historic townscape, reference - (<https://middletonheritage.co.uk/grants/conservation-area/>).

Although the existing garage is not itself a designated heritage asset, it sits within an area influenced by the architectural legacy of Edgar Wood and the surrounding historic townscape. The contribution of the existing structure to this setting is neutral to negative, given its dilapidated condition, poor-quality materials, and lack of architectural merit.

2. Assessment of Impact

The proposal seeks retrospective planning permission for the removal of the existing garage and replace it with a low-level residential dwelling. The following heritage considerations apply:

- Removal of the garage will not result in harm to the heritage significance of the area, as the existing garage structure did not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the Edgar Wood heritage setting.
- The proposed dwelling, being low in height and modest in scale, aligns with the principles of the Rochdale UDP Design and the Built Environment policies, which emphasise sympathetic design, appropriate massing, and respect for local character.
- The redevelopment represents an opportunity to enhance the streetscape, replacing a deteriorated structure with a sensitively designed building that better reflects the grain and scale of surrounding residential forms.

3. Design Response to Local Policy

In accordance with Rochdale's design and conservation guidance:

- The dwelling will adopt materials and proportions that complement the established character of the area.
- The low-level form ensures minimal visual intrusion, maintaining the rhythm of the street and respecting the wider heritage context.
- The proposal supports the aims of the Middleton Town Centre development framework, which encourages high quality residential development and the improvement of underused or visually harmful sites, (<https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/improving-borough/development-maps>).

4. Justification and Public Benefit

- The scheme replaces a dilapidated, non-contributing structure with a well-designed residential unit, improving the appearance and function of the site.
- It contributes to local housing need, consistent with the borough's objectives to deliver small-scale, sustainable residential development within existing urban areas.
- The proposal enhances the setting of nearby heritage assets by removing a visually harmful building and introducing a sympathetic, low-impact replacement.

5. Conclusion

The proposed development will preserve and enhance the character of the Edgar Wood heritage context by removing a deteriorated structure and introducing a sensitively designed, low-level dwelling. The scheme accords with Rochdale's conservation, design, and regeneration policies, and results in a net heritage benefit through improved visual quality and appropriate land use.