

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0405
Location: CRESCENT HALL, EDMUND STREET, ROCHDALE, OL12 6QG
Proposal: Listed Building Consent for partial application of lime render to existing perimeter wall
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Rosalind Gralton

SITE

The application site relates to Crescent Hall, a Grade II listed former Wesleyan chapel in the Spotland area of Rochdale. The site is situated in a dense residential area, prominently situated on the crossroads of Edmund Street and Silver Street.

The site is located within the Spotland Bridge Conservation Area and within the Defined Urban Areas (G/D/1).

The site is currently used as a nursery.

Designed by renowned Middleton Architect Edgar Wood, the chapel was built in 1893. It was one of his earliest ecclesiastical structures to be built. His first, the Old Unitarian Chapel in Middleton, was demolished in 1965.

The church was built in the Arts and Crafts style, with wide sloping buttresses, and elements of decorative render, which perhaps take their influence from the vernacular buildings of Essex. The Church was extended in 1902 with later 20th century additions. However, these have not diminished its special interest. The existing wall around the church was constructed c1926 and replaced an earlier wall constructed of standing York stones, which are a feature of the area, and a picket fence.

The former chapel is listed at grade II, reflecting its special architectural and historic interest. Its significance is enhanced by its links to Edgar Wood, its largely intact interior and exterior and its connections to the industrial landscape in which it was developed. The boundary wall, although a later addition, makes some contribution to the setting of the chapel. It clearly marks out its boundary and use a brick and detailing, which complements that of the chapel.

The formal listing of the building is under 'Silver Street Chapel, Silver Street' first listed in 2003. The listing details is below:

'335/0/10061 SILVER STREET 30-SEP-03 Silver Street Chapel

Non-conformist chapel. Dated 1893, with additions of 1902, and later C20 alterations and additions. By Edgar Wood, architect, of Middleton, for the Wesleyan Methodists, with additions of 1902 by T. Butterworth, architect of Dearnley. Red brick, laid to English bond, with ashlar sandstone dressings, quoins and decorative banding. Restrained Arts and Crafts style.

PLAN: Original T-shaped plan modified by additions to north and south elevations.

EXTERIOR: Front (east) elevation with wide gable rising from a sandstone plinth, with ashlar sandstone banding within the brick walling. Central entrance with ashlar quoining and semi-circular arch headed opening with drip mould. Datestone to the left of the double doorway. Ashlar plaque above arch head extends to dentilled cill band to stepped full-width window to gable apex, made up of 7 linked lancets. The gable apex is rendered, with sculptural decoration in the form of a tree rising from the arched head of the central lancet. Set in from the corners of the gable are wide sloping coursed stone buttresses which terminate above the cill band. Deep overhang to roof verges, supported on projecting ends of purlins and wall plates. Side (south) elevation with single-storeyed 4-bay addition extending almost the full length of the chapel. Projecting gable to east end with stepped 3-light stepped lancet window and sloping angle buttresses. 2-storeyed gabled crosswing to west end with 3-light stepped lancet window to upper floor above ground floor doorway. Between the gabled ranges, a 3-bay link with intermediate buttresses, each bay with 3, 3 over 3 pane windows. Lancets to west gable now blocked.

HISTORY: The Silver Street chapel is amongst Wood's earliest ecclesiastical commissions. The first, the Unitarian Chapel in Middleton was demolished in 1965. The building was built as a Wesleyan Chapel.'

PROPOSAL

Listed Building Consent is sought for partial application of lime render to existing perimeter wall. Full planning permission is not required due to the nature of the works.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 (as amended)

Section 66 of the above Act states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be, the Secretary of State 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.

Section 72 of the above Act states that in the exercise of planning functions with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of appearance of that area.

Core Strategy (CS):

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 Improving design of new development

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

24/00388/LBC - Approve with conditions

24/00387/FUL - Approve with conditions

16/00213/CPL - Approve

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Conservation Officer - No objections subject to additional information requested.

REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of representation was received:

I object to this planning application because I do not believe the proposed development is necessary and it would have a negative impact on the local area. There is no clear justification for this development, and I do not feel that it would provide sufficient benefits to outweigh the concerns of local residents.

Many neighbours and members of the local community also object to this proposal. There is significant concern about the effect it could have on the character of the area, local amenities, traffic levels, parking, and the overall quality of life for existing residents. The strength of local opposition demonstrates that this application does not have the support of those who would be most directly affected by it.

I respectfully ask the planning authority to carefully consider the concerns raised by local residents and refuse this application. The proposed development is unnecessary and would have an adverse impact on the local community without providing sufficient public benefit.

ANALYSIS

Impact on Character, Appearance and Heritage Assets

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, 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.

‘Significance’ with regard to heritage assets is defined by the NPPF as:

‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.’

The setting of a listed building is defined by the NPPF as:

‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

Core Strategy policy P2 states that the Council will conserve, promote and enhance key heritage assets and their wider settings, including listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments. Policy P1 seeks (inter alia) to promote the development and re-use of under-used land and buildings, maximising the potential for heritage assets to provide a sense of place and image.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;
- The opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.

Paragraph 213 of the NPPF states that in considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration of a heritage asset and as they are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional.

Where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, paragraph 214 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to consider this harm against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The proposal seeks to erect lime render to the perimeter walls of the property, where permission has been approved recently for new gates and fencing above the existing brick wall. The Conservation Officer was consulted as part of this application. The proposed lime render to be used is Womersleys Ironstone Basecoat Plaster in a natural lime/cream colour to match the rendered areas of the church building, finished in a lightly textured appearance, and no modern cement-based render or coatings are to be used. The proposal would also introduce weep holes into the wall with an approximate diameter of 2.5 inches each, to provide adequate drainage.

A methodology of the works have been provided via email, as follows;

'The proposed methodology is as follows:

- 1. Carefully remove all loose, defective or failed render by hand, avoiding unnecessary damage to the underlying historic masonry.*
- 2. Inspect the exposed masonry and rake out any loose or deteriorated mortar where necessary.*
- 3. Dub out the wall to restore an even surface by filling pockets, voids and areas of missing pointing using a relatively stiff lime-based mix compatible with the selected render.*
- 4. Apply a shallow scratch coat over all dubbed-out areas. This will be allowed to stiffen for a minimum of 48 hours before further coats are applied. During this period, the surface will be kept damp by light misting where necessary to ensure proper curing.*
- 5. Where repairs are carried out onto particularly smooth or highly porous backgrounds, an application of Womersleys Ironstone Bonding Coat will first be applied to provide a suitable key.*
- 6. Apply the Ironstone Basecoat Plaster in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, building up the required thickness using traditional hand application methods.*
- 7. Finish the repaired areas with a traditional lime finish, matching the existing appearance, texture and profile of the surrounding historic render as closely as possible.*
- 8. Form the proposed weepholes at the locations shown on the accompanying elevation drawing to assist with the controlled drainage and ventilation of moisture within the wall construction.*

Throughout the works, appropriate curing procedures will be followed, with newly applied lime render protected from rapid drying, frost and excessive rainfall in accordance with good conservation practice.'

The existing wall is a later addition to the building and in relatively poor condition with an identified need for repair. The proposed introduction of approximately 14 weep holes would reduce any moisture build up and a lime render would protect the brickwork and prevent further deterioration. The main church building includes elements of render in its facade and a use of lime render on the lower walls, leaving the coping stones and piers in their existing brick, is considered acceptable.

Assessment of Harm to the Listed Building

The NPPF requires, where less than substantial harm to a heritage asset is identified, that a balancing exercise is undertaken with respect to the public benefits of a scheme.

The development proposals would result in neutral harm to the significance of the building, which is included in the national list at Grade II, and there would be no loss of historic fabric, as the existing wall is a later addition. The proposed works would maintain the buildings existing viable use as a nursery, securing a viable long-term use for the building and ensuring the longevity of the building. Full details of the proposed works including methodology has been submitted and are considered acceptable, secured via condition.

Therefore, having regard to Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, policy JP-P2 of the adopted Places for Everyone, policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and Chapter 16 of the NPPF, the application is recommended for approval.

It is not considered the rendering of the wall as demonstrated would be considered unacceptable or to have an unacceptable impact on the significance of the listed building or its setting. As such, the proposal is acceptable.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (3)

- 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:

- Proposed Elevations V2 - received by the Council 10/07
- Proposed Site Boundary Plan
- Email from the applicant to the case officer dated 10/07

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 The works involving application of render and installation of weep holes hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the methodology provided via

email to the Case Officer dated 10/07/2026 from Faheem Chisti, pursuant to Condition 2 of this decision.

Reason: 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.