

Heritage Statement

Land at Birchinley Manor, Milnrow, Rochdale

February 2026



adapt heritage

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Adapt Heritage in connection with a full planning application for the construction of a residential dwelling with associated access and external works (the 'Proposed Development') on land at Birchinley Manor, Milnrow, Rochdale (the 'Application Site').
- 1.2 The Application Site does not contain any designated heritage assets. However, it lies in close proximity to Birchinley Manor (Grade II* Listed), the Barn adjoining the east side of Birchinley Manor (Grade II) and is also within the wider setting of Birchinley Hall Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) and the Barn adjacent to Birchinley Hall Farmhouse (Grade II). These assets have the potential to be affected through changes to their settings.
- 1.3 Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Rochdale Borough Council (the 'Council'), in determining the planning application, has a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings (s.66). The meaning of 'preservation' in this context, as informed by case law, is taken to be the avoidance of harm.
- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, Paragraph 207 states the following:
- "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be*

*proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."*¹

- 1.5 The report is structured as follows:
- Section 2 identifies the relevant heritage assets with potential to be affected by the Proposed Development.
 - Section 3 provides an overview of the history and development of the Application Site and the surrounding area.
 - Section 4 proportionately assesses the significance of relevant heritage assets and the contribution made by setting and the Application Site.
 - Section 5 provides an assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development in light of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF and local planning policy (set out in detail at **Appendix 1**).
 - Section 6 sets out the summary and conclusions.
- 1.6 The assessment is proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets and the nature and scale of the Proposed Development. It has been undertaken on the basis of existing published information, proportionate archival research and on-site visual survey. The report has been produced in accordance with guidance set out by Historic England including Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015), Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017); and Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019).

¹ MHCLG (2024) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary



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2. The Heritage Assets

Context

- 2.1 Annex 2 of the NPPF (2024) defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.”²

Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.2 Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of heritage interest that justifies designation under relevant legislation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions that involve them.

Listed Buildings

- 2.3 A review of the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), undertaken in February 2026, confirms that the following listed buildings lie in proximity to the Application Site:

Name	Grade	Designation Date	List Entry
Birchinley Manor Farmhouse	II*	24 January 1967	1334330
Barn adjoining East Side of Birchinley Manor Farmhouse	II	23 April 1986	1096908
Birchinley Hall Farmhouse	II	24 January 1967	1334321
Barn adjacent to Birchinley Hall Farmhouse	II	23 April 1986	1096938

²

MHCLG (2024) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary



Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.4 The NPPF identifies that heritage assets include both designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). Historic England's guidance on 'Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment' (2015) states that:

“Non-designated heritage assets include those that have been identified in a Historic Environment Record, in a local plan, through local listing or during the process of considering the application.”³

Rochdale Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.5 Rochdale Borough Council maintains a list of non-designated heritage assets within the area which was last updated on Wednesday 28 June 2023. These have been identified upon the following criteria:

- **Architectural significance** - sites that demonstrate local architectural style and character or are associated with a local architect, designer or engineer of importance.
- **Historical significance** - sites associated with a local historical event, that have importance as a community asset, are associated with local famous or notable people or appear on the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey Map.
- **Positive contribution** - such as a landmark or as part of a key view.
- **Designed landscape** - asset is a component of a designed landscape.

- 2.6 As of February 2026, there are no formally recognised non-designated heritage assets proximate to the Application Site.

³

Historic England (2015) Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking

3. The Site and the Surrounding Area

Location and Context

- 3.1 The Application Site (Figures 3.1–3.3) is located off Wildhouse Lane to the north of Milnrow. To the west lie Birchinley Manor (Grade II*), Birchinley Hall (Grade II) and their associated listed barns, forming a dispersed historic agricultural grouping. To the south, east and north the landscape comprises predominantly open agricultural fields, interspersed with areas of late 20th century infill and landscape modification.



Figure 3.1: The Application Site © Google Maps (2025)

- 3.2 Immediately beyond the historic grouping to the west is a modern residential development (Ref: 20/00639/FUL), currently under construction, representing a substantial recent change in the character of the wider area.



Figures 3.2 & 3.3: The Application Site © Google Maps (2025)

- 3.3 The Application Site itself comprises land formerly associated with a sandstone quarry (since infilled) to the east, together with undulating open land falling broadly from west to east. The Site has undergone significant landscape alteration during the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Overview of Historic Development

- 3.4 The following overview of the historic development of the Application Site and the surrounding area has been informed by proportionate archival research, historic map regression and a review of published sources.
- 3.5 The area known as 'Birchinley' is first mentioned in the 13th century in relation to 'Richard le Birchinlegh' paying rent to Thomas Wyld⁴, but little else information is known prior to this. The name is likely to derive from a 'field of birches' which was a common tree type in the Vale of Roch prior to the Industrial Revolution.
- 3.6 By the 15th century, Birchinley is known to have belonged to Henry Lee of Wheatley, in the County of York, and it descended to his son Alexander Lee, who had two daughters, Joanna and Elizabeth; the former married Gervase Hobson, and the latter Robert Butterworth.⁵ By the time of 1556, both families were living at Birchinley and by deed of partition, dated 13th November 1556, they divided the estate.⁶
- 3.7 From the division, Gervase and Joanna Hobson took the south end of the close called the 'Lower Lee' and the north end of the house standing therein, and he was to have a free way through all the rest of the estate to use "*as free lie as man may the Kinges highe street*".⁷ Butterworth took the other land and the south end of the house, and the wall which divided the two "*straight up to the top*".⁸
- 3.8 The estate(s) then passed through various different ownerships over the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Birchinley Hall is believed to be the oldest house amongst the complex, dating from c.1619. This is followed by

Birchinley Manor which is from c.1636. Both properties likely incorporate earlier historic fabric.

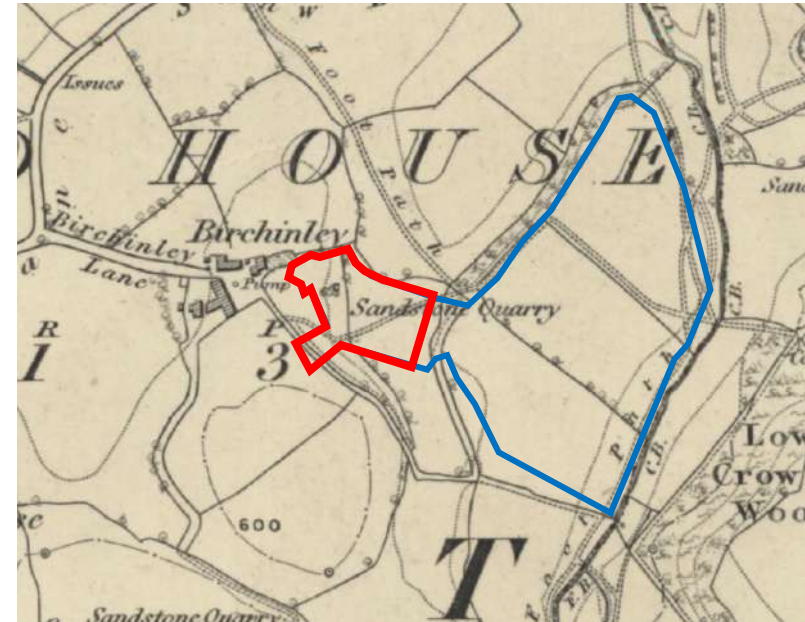


Figure 3.4: Ordnance Survey of Lancashire surveyed in 1844-1848 and published in 1851 © National Library of Scotland

- 3.9 The Application Site and the surrounding area are illustrated on the 1851 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.4) which shows it as consisting of predominantly open land and a sandstone quarry to the east of the complex of buildings forming a courtyard farmstead including Birchinley Hall and Birchinley Manor off Birchinley Lane.

⁴ Fishwick, Henry (1889) *The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster*
⁵ Fishwick, Henry (1889) *The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster*
⁶ Fishwick, Henry (1889) *The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster*

⁷ Fishwick, Henry (1889) *The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster*
⁸ Fishwick, Henry (1889) *The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster*



- 3.10 Both estates of Birchinley Hall and Birchinley Manor were purchased by James Fenton of Ribchester in 1857⁹ and combined back into one ownership and remained this way until at least 1889. It is likely that the buildings were leased to tenant farmers during this time as Fenton resided at Dutton Manor in Longridge.



Figure 3.5: Engraving of Birchinley Hall from a drawing by George Wright c.1889 © Henry Fishwick¹⁰

- 3.11 An engraving / sketch from the same period (Figure 3.5) shows the original arrangement of Birchinley Hall as it stood in the late 19th century. It includes pitched gables at each end, with an off-centre entrance with single storey porch varied chimneystacks. It also appears to show numerous mullion and transom windows with hoodmoulds.

- 3.12 Both houses at Birchinley are briefly described in *'The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster'* by Henry Fishwick (1889) as follows:

"... There are now at Birchinley the remains of two old houses, the older one being unoccupied and partially in ruins [see sketch], but enough remains to show that it once formed one of the old halls of Butterworth.

Over the porch is engraved on a stone, "A. C., J. C., 1619, R. K., A. C., R. B," which refers to the joint owners, Alexander Collinge, Joan his wife, Robert Kay, Alexander Collinge the younger, and Robert Butterworth. In the porch is an ancient iron-studded door, and in what was once the hall part of the house are the remains of a fine oak staircase. The place where the open fireplace stood is clearly traceable. The walls are nearly three feet thick, and in the ceilings are some large oak beams. Birchinley when rebuilt must have been a fine specimen of domestic architecture of the period.

*The house now used as a farm house is not so old nor so interesting in appearance, although it has built into it some stone gargoyles which have belonged to a much more ancient edifice."*¹¹

- 3.13 The article from 1889 identifies that Birchinley Hall is the oldest property within the complex but notes that it is unused and partially in ruins by the late 19th century. It rather dismisses the other building, Birchinley Manor, and suggests that it is 'not so old nor so interesting'.
- 3.14 There are no references to the surrounding land, including the Application Site, but it is likely that these were in agricultural use by this point to support the farmstead and use of the buildings at Birchinley.

⁹
¹⁰

Fishwick, Henry (1889) *The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster*
Fishwick, Henry (1889) *The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster*

¹¹ Fishwick, Henry (1889) *The History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster*



- 3.15 The complex at Birchinley is shown on the 1893 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.6) and notes that both principal houses have been extended by this point together with other supporting buildings. The Quarry is no longer in use and is noted as 'Old Quarry'. The wider land that forms part of the Application Site is shown as open agricultural fields. A tree plantation is shown to the north boundary, close to a ridge. Planting is also shown to the south west and a defined public footpath cuts across the site.

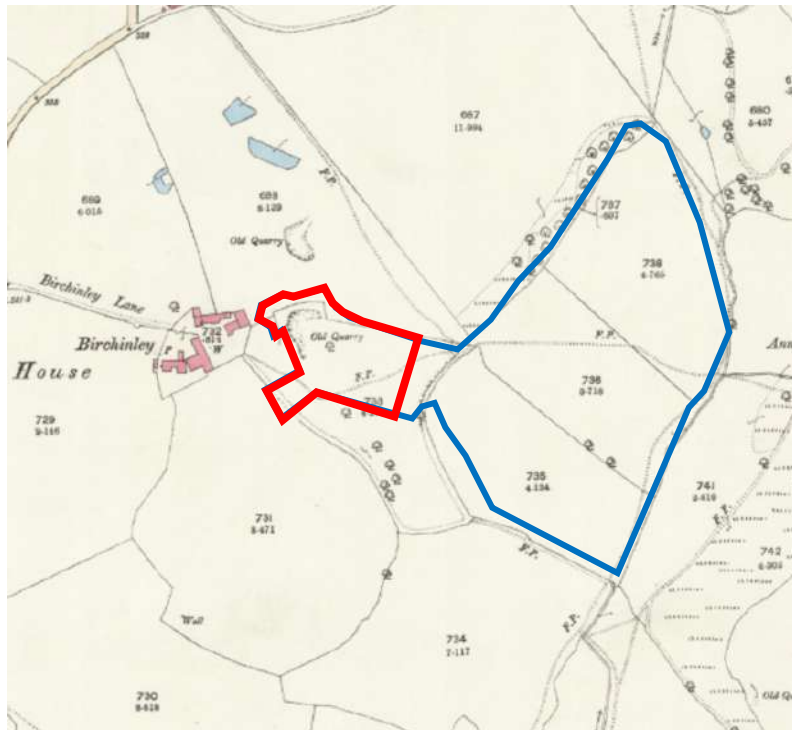


Figure 3.6: Ordnance Survey of Lancashire surveyed in 1891 and published in 1893 © National Library of Scotland

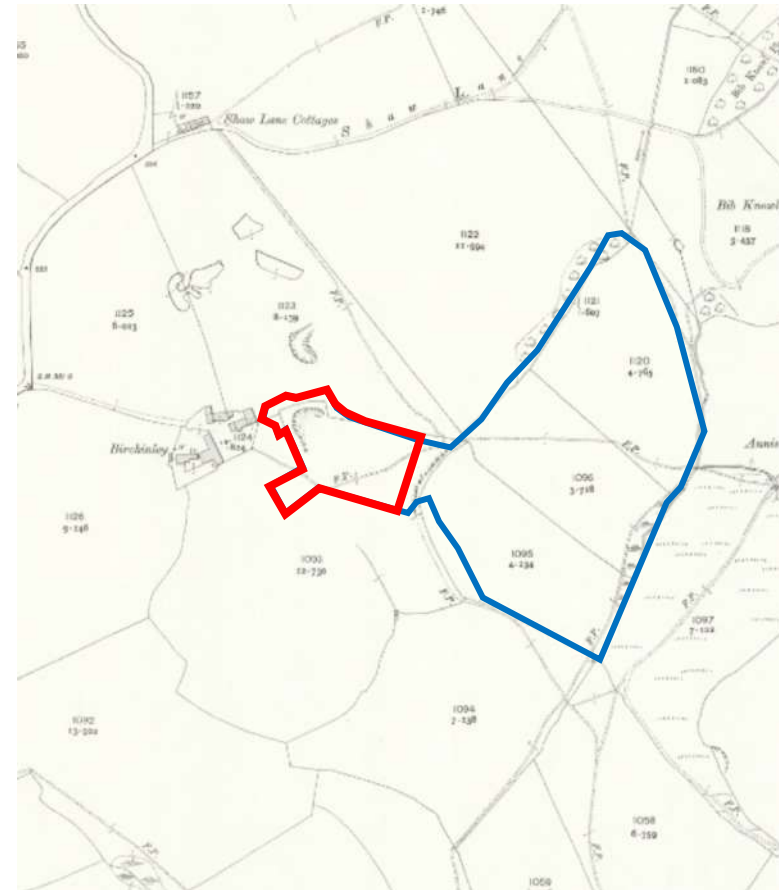


Figure 3.7: Ordnance Survey of Lancashire surveyed in 1907 and published in 1910 © National Library of Scotland

- 3.16 By the time of the 1910 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.7), the planting to the south west has been removed. There are no other discernible changes to the Application Site or the surrounding area.



- 3.17 In September 1925, an article was published in the Rochdale Observer relating to the history and provenance of Birchinley Hall and Manor. It sets out similar commentary to the 1889 publication but goes on to state that:

"... At Birchinley are two old houses, each of which possesses its own points of interest, and one is evidently of greater age than the other. The old house which figures above [Birchinley Manor] has built into its walls several stones which are survivals from a much older building, while other stones from that source are to be found in the walls of the farm buildings.

For instance, projecting from the walls of the house are two gargoyles, each of which bears on its extremity a very crudely cut face. One of these long stone projections is very noticeable in the illustration, and they carry our thoughts back to the good old days when, on rainy nights, the pedestrian in town wending his way among heaps of refuse, was liable at any moment to come under a torrent spouted down from the mouth of some grinning gargoyle.

On other side of the barn door at the spring of the arch is a very nicely sculptured human head. One of these is in full view, but its companion is entirely hidden behind the wall of an adjoining building. On other stones are the dates 1631, 1723, 1734-7 and on the grass in front of the house lies a door lintel of Tudor design, with a floral ornament carved in each of the upper corners and in the middle the date 1631... The present owner of the old house takes a great interest in its antiquarian features and is anxious to preserve them....

*Birchinley is one of those quaint interesting places in our district which tantalises us by the meagreness of their recorded history.... Scanning this historical desert somewhat ruefully the pilgrim searches for even a microscopic oasis of interest – alas the quest is in vain."*¹²

- 3.18 The latter point seems to correspond with the limited information available on the history and development of Birchinley. It also indicates that, in 1925, Birchinley Manor was considered the oldest building. Interestingly, both properties are confirmed as being in use during this time, suggesting that Birchinley Hall had been rebuilt and/or refurbished at some point between 1889 and 1925.



Figure 3.8: Photograph of Birchinley Manor, September 1925 © The Rochdale Observer¹³

- 3.19 The 1925 article within the Rochdale Observer also published a photograph of Birchinley Manor (Figure 3.8) and was followed the following week by one of Birchinley Hall (Figure 3.9).

¹²

The Rochdale Observer (1925) Article on September 26



¹³

The Rochdale Observer (1925) Articles on September 26



Figure 3.9: Photograph of Birchinley Hall, October 1925 © The Rochdale Observer¹⁴

3.20 The 1930 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.10) shows a number of changes to the complex of buildings around Birchinley including enlarged barns and potential later additions. The tree plantation to the north of the Application Site has been removed by this point. A 'Spring' is also shown to the south together with an enlarged footpath. The surrounding area remains as agricultural fields during this time.

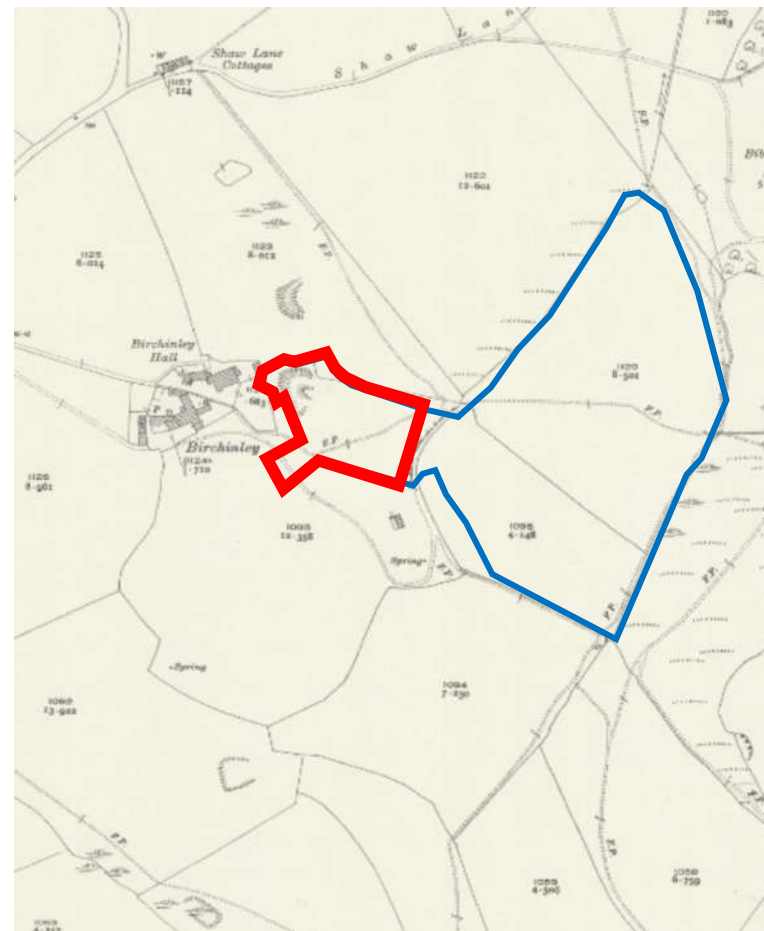


Figure 3.10: Ordnance Survey of Lancashire surveyed in 1928 and published in 1930 © National Library of Scotland



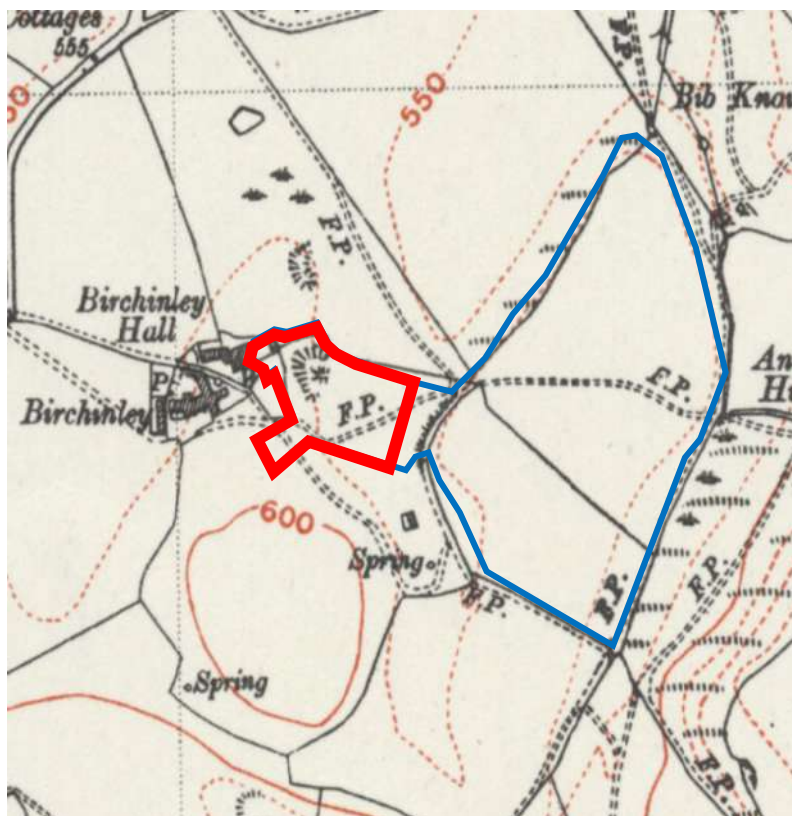


Figure 3.11: Ordnance Survey of Lancashire surveyed in 1938 and published in 1947 © National Library of Scotland

- 3.21 There appears to be no changes to the Application Site or the surrounding area by the time of the 1947 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.11). The Birchinley complex continued to be used as a farmstead during this time with a number of later modern barns and structures added to support this continued use.

- 3.22 In the late 20th century, the Application Site and the surrounding area was subject to a number of significant changes. This includes the construction of a garden centre (later equestrian centre) to the west of the site and utilising parts of the Application Site as a landfill and recycling centre. During this time, Birchinley Manor fell out of use and declined significantly but it is understood that Birchinley Hall remained in use.



Figure 3.12: Satellite View of the Application Site and Surrounding Area © Google Maps (2000)

- 3.23 At the start of the early 21st century, the landfill site was re-landscaped which involved areas of re-grading and infilling of the former quarry (Figures 3.12 and 3.13).





Figure 3.13: Satellite View of the Application Site and Surrounding Area © Google Maps (2005)

- 3.24 In 2012, planning permission and listed building consent was granted to alter and convert Birchinley Manor alongside the construction of five new residential dwellings (Figure 3.14). These works involved the partial subdivision of the house and the existing barns, together with demolition of later buildings. These works are shown as completed at Figure 3.14.



Figure 3.14: Satellite View of the Application Site and Surrounding Area © Google Maps (2021)





Figure 3.15: Satellite View of the Application Site and Surrounding Area © Google Maps (2025)

- 3.25 In May 2021, planning permission (Ref: 20/00639/FUL) was granted for the clearance of existing buildings and redevelopment of the former equestrian centre together with the construction of 47 residential dwellings with associated highways, landscaping and open space. This work is currently construction (Figure 3.16).



Figure 3.16: View of the neighbouring development under construction (July 2024)

- 3.26 As found today, the Application Site remains as open and partially former infilled land (Figures 3.17 to 3.20). There are small areas of mature planting to the periphery, outside of the red line boundary.





Figures 3.17 & 3.18: Views of the Application Site Looking East (July 2024)



Figures 3.19 & 3.20: Views of the Application Site Looking West (July 2024)



Summary of Historic Development

- In summary, Birchinley has functioned historically as a modest agricultural estate centred upon Birchinley Hall (c.1619) and Birchinley Manor (c.1631–1636). The surrounding land, including the Application Site, appears historically to have served an agricultural function rather than forming part of a designed domestic setting.
- While the Site lay within the wider agricultural holding, it was historically characterised as open land and former quarry rather than as part of the principal courtyard or domestic garden associated with the listed buildings.
- During the late 20th century, the Application Site underwent substantial alteration through quarry infilling, landfill activity and associated commercial uses, resulting in material change to its historic character.
- More recent residential development within the wider area, including the 2012 conversion scheme and the 2021 housing development, has further altered the character of the surrounding landscape.
- As such, the Application Site today reads as previously altered and transitional land within the wider setting of the listed buildings, rather than as an intact or historically legible component of their immediate agricultural or domestic context.



4. Assessment of Significance

Significance and Special Interest

- 4.1 The NPPF (2024) defines the significance of a heritage asset 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.”¹⁵

Listed Buildings

- 4.2 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold architectural or historic interest. The principles of selection for listed buildings are published by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport¹⁶ and supported by Historic England’s Listing Selection Guides for each building typology.

Setting

- 4.3 The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset 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.”¹⁷

- 4.4 Historic England’s guidance in respect of the setting of heritage assets, provides detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of

the impact of any changes. It confirms that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, rather its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the relevant heritage asset itself.

- 4.5 Further guidance on the definition of setting and how it should be taken into account is set out in national Planning Practice Guidance. In assessing the contribution of setting to the significance of the following identified heritage assets the role of the Application Site has also been considered.

Assessment

- 4.6 As set out earlier, the following assessments are proportionate to the significance of the relevant listed buildings and the nature and scale of the Proposed Development. It has been informed by published information, desktop archival research and on-site visual survey.
- 4.7 The assessments have been produced in accordance with following guidance set out in Historic England’s Advice Notes including:
- Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015);
 - The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017); and
 - Statements of Heritage Significance (2019).

¹⁵

MHCLG (2024) *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary*
DCMS (2018) *Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings*

¹⁶

¹⁷

Historic England (2017) *Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*



Birchinley Manor (Grade II* Listed) and Barn to East (Grade II Listed)



Figure 4.1: Birchinley Manor and Barn (2024)

Significance

- 4.8 Birchinley Manor (Figures 4.1 and 4.2) principally dates from c.1631 but likely contains earlier origins and was built as yeoman's house. The manor displays traditional details which characterise 17th century domestic architecture.¹⁸ It is built from hammer-dressed stone with a graduated stone slate roof. Despite undergoing some renovations and rebuilding, notably a wing reconstructed in 1973 and later works in the 21st century, the manor retains much of its original character and form.

- 4.9 The listed building adopts a two-storey hearth-passage plan with projecting cross wings. The right cross wing has been rebuilt but is understood to still incorporate the original 1631 lintel towards the rear.¹⁹ One of the most distinctive features of the manor is its recessed porch, which features a chamfered Tudor-arched door surround with a moulded outer door and a basket-headed lintel. The windows are equally interesting, with ovolo-moulded, double-chamfered mullion designs in various light configurations, including four, five, six, and eight lights. Above these windows runs a continuous hood mould.



Figure 4.2: Birchinley Manor (2024)

- 4.10 The roofline is adorned with coped gables complete with kneelers and intricate gargoyles, while the projecting gable chimney stack features diagonally set shafts, further adding to the architectural composition and interest of the listed building.

¹⁸

Historic England (1967) *List Entry Description for Birchinley Manor*



¹⁹

Pevsner, Hartwell & Hyde (2004) *Pevsner Guide, Lancashire: Manchester and the South East*

- 4.11 Adjacent to the manor is a former late 17th or early 18th century barn (Figure 4.3), separately listed at Grade II, which is notably long and constructed from hammer-dressed stone, similar to the manor. It features opposed elliptical-headed cart entries with chamfered surrounds, accented by crude carved heads on the springing stones. The roof includes coped gables and kneelers. The building has been converted into residential use which has led to new window and door openings, but the overall agricultural character of the listed building remains appreciable.



Figure 4.3: Barn to Birchinley Manor (2024)



Figure 4.4: Infill Barn (2024)

- 4.12 The later barn, built in 1832, is wider and shorter, designed to fill the space between the earlier barn and the manor house (Figure 4.4). It features three door openings separated by heavily dressed vents, with loft hatches at both ends. Notably, the north end of the barn reuses an earlier door surround and incorporates an older date plaque.²⁰ Again, this part of the building has been converted into residential use but its character as a barn remains legible.

Contribution made by Setting

- 4.13 Birchinley Manor historically sat within an open rural landscape, surrounded by agricultural fields, and patches of woodland, reflecting its origins historic roots as a 17th century yeoman's house and wider farmstead. The area around the manor is relatively elevated, offering views out towards the South Pennine hills. Its setting has dramatically changed in the 20th century with later modern developments, clearances and infilling of land.



Figure 4.5: View to Birchinley Manor (2024)

- 4.14 As found today, the manor is experienced as part of a wider collection of residential dwellings which gives it a more semi-rural and suburban character (Figure 4.5). The impact of this has been mitigated, to a degree, by the agricultural design of the buildings which serve to reinforce the former farmstead character of the area. These later modern buildings do,

however, act as a screen to the listed complex from the land to east (forming the Application Site) as shown at Figure 4.6.



Figure 4.6: View to Birchinley Manor (2024)

- 4.15 Birchinley Manor is primarily and directly experienced from its immediate south (Figure 4.7) where its original 17th century character and distinctive detailing is best appreciated. Its later rebuilding is also evident in these views, together with the neighbouring Barn complex which allows for an understanding of its former historic and functional use as a farmhouse within a wider farmstead. Modern residential development is experienced alongside the listed building in these views (Figure 4.8).





Figures 4.7 & 4.8: Views to and from Birchinley Manor (2024)

- 4.16 Due to the topography of the land and the extent of intervening development, there are limited other areas in which to experience the manor and barn.

Birchinley Hall (Grade II Listed) and Barn to the East (Grade II Listed)



Figure 4.9: Birchinley Hall and Barn (2024)

Significance

- 4.17 Birchinley Hall (Figure 4.9) was built in c.1619, as noted by the inscription on the door lintel.²¹ It is a fine example of 17th century domestic architecture for this period. The building is constructed from hammer-dressed stone with a graduated stone slate roof. It adopts a three-unit hearth-passage plan with two stories. The features include two projecting and distinctive gabled cross wings at both ends, creating an overall balanced composition.

²¹

Historic England (1967) *List Entry Description for Birchinley Hall*



- 4.18 One of the most distinctive elements of Birchinley Hall is its slightly projecting porch, located within the left cross wing. The porch features chamfered inner and outer door surrounds with integrated stone seats, providing a welcoming yet imposing entrance. The outer doorway has an elliptical head, with the lintel displaying recessed spandrels and an inscription that reads: "ACIC1619RKACRB". This is believed to reference the names Alexander Collinge, Joan Collinge, Robert Kay, Alexander C., and Robert Butterworth.²² This provides a physical and tangible link to the historic owners of the listed building.
- 4.19 The windows of Birchinley Hall are understood to include double-chamfered cavetto-moulded mullion windows arranged in light configurations of four, five, and four on the ground floor, and three, three, and four on the first floor.²³ Many of these windows are accentuated by hoodmoulds, which protect against rain and add to its architectural detailing. The roofline is punctuated by a 20th century ridge chimney stack, likely added during later rebuilding works in the 20th century. It has been extended in the 21st century.
- 4.20 Adjacent to Birchinley Hall is a barn (Figures 4.9 and 4.10), also Grade II Listed, dating from the late 17th or early 18th century. It is constructed from squared rubble with a graduated stone slate roof and comprises five structural bays. A later addition or rebuilt outshut is located to the left of the cart entry, while a more recent outshut extends along the entire rear length.²⁴ The building has been converted into residential use which has led to new window and door openings, but the overall agricultural character of the listed building remains appreciable.



Figure 4.10: Barn to Birchinley Hall (2024)

²² Historic England (1967) *List Entry Description for Birchinley Hall*
²³ Historic England (1967) *List Entry Description for Birchinley Hall*

²⁴ Historic England (1986) *List Entry Description for Barn to Birchinley Hall*



Contribution made by Setting

- 4.21 As with Birchinley Manor, Birchinley Hall historically sat within an open rural landscape, surrounded by agricultural fields, and patches of woodland, reflecting its origins historic roots as a 17th century yeoman's house and wider farmstead. The area around the hall is relatively elevated, offering views out towards the South Pennine hills. Its setting has also dramatically changed in the 20th century with later modern developments, clearances and infilling of land.
- 4.22 As found today, the hall is largely screened by existing mature planting to the north and south, the neighbouring barn to the east and modern residential development to the west (Figure 4.11). As a result, there are few areas in which to experience the listed building.



Figure 4.11: View to Birchinley Hall (2024)

- 4.23 As with the manor complex, Birchinley Hall is primarily and directly experienced from its immediate south where its original 17th century character and distinctive detailing is best appreciated. Its later rebuilding is also evident in these views, together with the neighbouring Barn complex

which allows for an understanding of its former historic and functional use as a farmhouse within a wider farmstead. Modern residential development is experienced alongside the listed building in these views.



Figures 4.12 & 4.13: Views to Barn (2024)

- 4.24 The barn is experienced from other areas due to its more exposed position such as from the south, where it is read alongside modern residential development (Figure 4.12). From the south east, the barn is experienced alongside further development and is read as part of a wider semi-rural landscape (Figure 4.13).



Contribution made by the Application Site to the Significance of the Listed Buildings

- 4.25 As set out in further detail at Section 3, the Application Site historically consisted of open agricultural fields adjacent to the Birchinley farmstead complex. In the mid to late 20th century, the setting of the listed buildings changed dramatically with later modern developments, clearances and infilling of land.
- 4.26 Archival research and historic map regression indicates that the Application Site likely held an historic, functional, and visual connection with the listed buildings associated within the Birchinley farmstead complex. This is due to the proximity of the land to the listed buildings. These former connections have, however, been heavily eroded by the subdivision of the farmstead complex, change of use and the construction of new development between the buildings and the site. These cumulative changes have diminished the contribution made by the Application Site to the significance of the listed buildings.
- 4.27 There is a limited visual relationship between the Application Site and the listed buildings due to the topography of the land and intervening development. There are no views of Birchinley Manor and Barn together with Birchinley Hall. Only the Barn to Birchinley Hall is experienced in distant and glimpsed views from the site. This does not, however, allow for any appreciation or understanding of the significance of the listed buildings.
- 4.28 The Application Site in its current form does not make a positive contribution towards the significance of Birchinley Manor and Barn together with Birchinley Hall and Barn. With reference to Paragraph 219 of the NPPF, although the Application Site is part of the setting and physical surroundings of the heritage assets, it is not an aspect that positively contributes to their significance.



5. Impact Assessment

Summary of Legislation and National Planning Policy

- 5.1 Under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Rochdale Borough Council, in determining the planning application, is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. As informed by case law, preservation in this context means the avoidance of harm.
- 5.2 Paragraph 210 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, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.3 Paragraph 212 requires when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. 'Conservation' is defined by the NPPF as *'the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.'*
- 5.4 Paragraph 219 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to better reveal their significance. With respect to setting, the NPPF notes that proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

- 5.5 Further details of the heritage legislation, national and local planning policy and guidance for consideration of the Proposed Development is set out in **Appendix I**.

Pre-Application Discussions

- 5.6 The Proposed Development has been informed by pre-application engagement with Rochdale Borough Council. The principle of development on the Application Site, and its potential impact on the setting of the nearby listed buildings, were considered at that stage.
- 5.7 The current submission reflects a refined layout and slightly reconfigured siting when compared to the earlier iteration reviewed at pre-application stage, improving landscape integration and spatial separation.

The Proposed Development

- 5.8 The Proposed Development comprises the construction of a single residential dwelling with associated access, landscaping and ecological enhancement works on the Application Site.
- 5.9 The design approach seeks to create a contemporary interpretation of a farmhouse typology, informed by the historic agricultural character of the Birchinley complex. The proposal also includes the use of adjacent land to the east as a managed re-wilding and wildlife area, reinforcing a landscape-led strategy and limiting the perceived extent of built form within the wider setting.
- 5.10 The design and layout are set out in detail within the accompanying architectural drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by CJ Partnership Environmental Architects.



Impact Assessment

- 5.11 This impact assessment employs national advice provided by Historic England as an appropriate framework for analysis, including Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015), which sets out the importance of good design and response to local distinctiveness for new development in the historic environment. This advice provides a checklist of factors that may influence what will make the scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and proposed use of new development successful in its context.

Birchinley Manor (Grade II*) and Associated Barns (Grade II)

- 5.12 Birchinley Manor derives its significance primarily from its 17th century architectural interest, surviving historic fabric, hearth-passage plan form, distinctive mullioned windows, roofscape detailing and its legibility as part of a former agricultural farmstead grouping. The adjacent listed barns contribute to this significance through their group value and retained agricultural character.
- 5.13 The Proposed Development does not involve any physical alteration to the fabric of Birchinley Manor or its associated listed barns. The assessment of impact therefore relates solely to potential effects upon setting.
- 5.14 Historically, the Application Site formed part of the wider agricultural landholding associated with the farmstead. However, as set out in Section 3, that relationship has been materially altered through late 20th century landfill activity, regrading, subdivision of the farmstead, residential conversion and more recent housing development to the west. The Site no longer forms part of an intact or directly legible agricultural setting associated with the historic core.

- 5.15 Birchinley Manor is principally experienced from its immediate southern and courtyard-facing aspects, where its architectural detailing and relationship with the barns are most clearly appreciated. Intervening development and topography limit intervisibility between the Application Site and the listed buildings. Where views exist, they are partial and filtered and do not materially contribute to an appreciation of the buildings' architectural or historic interest.
- 5.16 The refined siting and layout of the Proposed Development respond to this context. The dwelling adopts a composition informed by traditional farmstead arrangements, including courtyard elements and pitched gables reflecting the established roofscape language of the Birchinley buildings. The L-shaped plan form draws conceptual reference from the hierarchy of the existing complex while remaining clearly subordinate and separate.
- 5.17 The proposed materials palette comprises natural Pennine coursed sandstone, natural blue slate roofing, dark metal rainwater goods, a green roof element and areas of timber cladding proposed in a dark / charred finish. The use of stone and slate reflects the established vernacular character of the Birchinley complex. The incorporation of darker timber elements is informed by the existing tonal qualities within the setting, including black-painted rainwater goods and window frames at Birchinley Manor and darker finishes evident within adjacent converted agricultural buildings.
- 5.18 In this context, the darker timber treatment is considered visually recessive and contextually grounded, providing contrast and depth while allowing the stone elements to remain dominant. It also reduces visual reflectivity when viewed against the Pennine backdrop, assisting the building to sit quietly within the landscape. While the final finish can be secured by condition if required, the material treatment does not alter the scale, massing or spatial relationship of the development to the listed buildings.



5.19 The dwelling would remain clearly subordinate in scale and detached from the historic core. It would not interrupt key views in which Birchinley Manor and its barns are experienced, nor would it compete with their architectural prominence.

5.20 The landscape strategy, including retention of existing stone boundary walls, supplementary native planting and ecological enhancement works, reinforces separation between the Proposed Development and the listed complex.

5.21 The Proposed Development would therefore sustain the significance of Birchinley Manor (Grade II*) and its associated Grade II barns and those elements of setting which contribute.

Birchinley Hall (Grade II) and Associated Barn (Grade II)

5.22 Birchinley Hall derives its significance from its early 17th century architectural interest, inscription, hearth-passage plan and its relationship with its associated barn. The Application Site lies at a distance from Birchinley Hall and is visually filtered by intervening development and planting. The hall is primarily experienced within its immediate southern context and in association with its adjacent barn.

5.23 The Proposed Development would not alter the principal views in which Birchinley Hall is experienced, nor would it affect the legibility of its historic relationship with its associated barn. Given the limited intervisibility and cumulative change within the wider landscape, the introduction of a single dwelling on the Application Site would not materially affect the way in which Birchinley Hall and its barn are understood or appreciated.

5.24 Similarly, the Proposed Development would therefore sustain the significance of Birchinley Hall (Grade II) and its associated Barn (Grade II) and those elements of setting which contribute.

Statutory Duty

5.25 In accordance with Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Rochdale Borough Council must have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.

5.26 As demonstrated above, the Application Site has been heavily altered and no longer forms an intact or legible part of the historic farmstead setting. The Proposed Development would not affect the fabric of any listed building, would remain physically and visually separate from the Birchinley group, and would not intrude into the key views in which the listed buildings are experienced or compete with the Grade II* Manor's prominence. Its siting, scale and materials are designed to be subordinate and are informed by the established vernacular and tonal character of the complex.

5.27 For these reasons, the Proposed Development would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of Birchinley Manor (Grade II*), Birchinley Hall (Grade II) and their associated listed barns. The statutory duty under Section 66(1) is therefore satisfied.

National Planning Policy

5.28 The Proposed Development accords with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), including:

- Paragraph 210, which seeks to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets;
- Paragraph 212, which requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets; and



- Paragraph 219, which supports development within the setting of heritage assets where those elements of setting that contribute positively to significance are preserved.

5.29 As the Proposed Development would result in no harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, there is no requirement to undertake a balancing exercise under Paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

5.30 At a local level, the Proposed Development has been assessed against the relevant heritage policies of the Rochdale Local Plan (Core Strategy 2016 and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan where applicable).

5.31 Those policies require development proposals to preserve or enhance the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings.

5.32 For the reasons set out in this assessment, the Proposed Development would preserve the significance and setting of the relevant listed buildings and therefore accords with the heritage policies of the Rochdale Local Plan.



6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Adapt Heritage in connection with a full planning application for the erection of a single residential dwelling with associated access, landscaping and ecological enhancement works (the 'Proposed Development') on land at Birchinley, Milnrow (the 'Application Site').
- 6.2 The Application Site lies within the wider setting of Birchinley Manor (Grade II*), the Barn adjoining Birchinley Manor (Grade II), Birchinley Hall (Grade II) and the Barn adjoining Birchinley Hall (Grade II).
- 6.3 Under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Rochdale Borough Council, in determining the planning application, is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings. Preservation in this context is understood to mean the avoidance of harm.
- 6.4 This assessment has demonstrated that the significance of Birchinley Manor derives principally from its 17th century architectural interest, surviving historic fabric, distinctive mullioned windows, hearth-passage plan form and roofscape detailing, together with its legibility as part of a former agricultural farmstead grouping. Birchinley Hall similarly derives its significance from its early 17th century architectural character, inscription and relationship with its associated barn.
- 6.5 The Application Site historically formed part of the wider agricultural landholding associated with the Birchinley complex. However, that relationship has been materially altered through late 20th century infilling, landfill activity, regrading, subdivision of the farmstead and subsequent residential development within the wider area. The Site no longer forms part of an intact or directly legible agricultural setting associated with the historic core.
- 6.6 The Proposed Development has been informed by pre-application engagement and reflects a refined siting and layout when compared to earlier iterations. The dwelling adopts a contemporary design informed by traditional farmstead arrangements, including courtyard elements and pitched gables which reflect the established roofscape language of the Birchinley buildings. The materials palette, comprising natural Pennine sandstone, natural blue slate, dark metal rainwater goods and areas of dark / charred timber cladding, draws from the established vernacular and tonal qualities within the Birchinley complex. The darker timber treatment is considered visually recessive and contextually grounded, allowing the stone elements to remain visually dominant within the landscape.
- 6.7 The Proposed Development would not alter the fabric of any listed building. It would remain physically and visually separate from the historic core, would not interrupt key views in which the listed buildings are experienced, and would not undermine their architectural prominence, group value or legibility as a former farmstead. The landscape strategy further reinforces spatial separation and mitigates potential visual effects.
- 6.8 Accordingly, the Proposed Development would preserve the significance and setting of Birchinley Manor (Grade II*), Birchinley Hall (Grade II) and their associated listed barns (Grade II). It would result in no harm to designated heritage assets. The statutory duty under Section 66(1) is therefore satisfied, and the proposals accord with the relevant provisions of the NPPF (2024) and the Rochdale Local Plan.



Appendix I: Heritage Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance



Heritage Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Below is an overview of the relevant heritage legislation, national and local planning policy and supplementary planning documents and guidance.

Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Under The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Rochdale Borough Council, in determining the full planning application, has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special interest they may possess (s.66). The meaning of 'preservation', as informed by case law, is taken to be the avoidance of harm.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework requires that great weight is given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and this reflects the statutory duty of the 1990 Act with respect to listed buildings and conservation areas. Conservation is defined by the NPPF as *"the process of maintaining and managing change to heritage assets in ways that sustain and where appropriate, enhance their significance."*

Paragraph 210 of the NPPF elaborates that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 212 requires when considering the impact of a Proposed Development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss requires clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 214 states that where a Proposed Development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm and or loss is necessary to achieve substantial benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- *"the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use"*

Paragraph 215 requires 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 securing its optimum viable use.

Paragraph 219 requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to better reveal their significance. With respect to setting, the NPPF notes that proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.



Local Planning Policy

Rochdale Local Plan (2016)

The Rochdale Local Plan (Core Strategy) was adopted on 19 October 2016. It's the lead document in the Council's Local Plan. In relation to protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage, Policy P2 of the Core Strategy states that:

"1. We will protect and enhance the borough's character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the qualities of its landscapes, utilising the considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. We will do this by:

Requiring new development to integrate successfully with the key natural features of the borough, e.g. river valleys and the Pennine landscape;

Requiring new development to take opportunities to protect and open up important views of hills and valleys which are part of the borough's unique character;

Restoring the River Roch and other water bodies to their place as key and attractive features of the borough, including opening up waterways where they have been covered, and enhancing their setting, heritage assets and biodiversity potential;

Protecting, enhancing and utilising outstanding cultural landscapes, such as the Cheesden Valley area and around Littleborough and Hollingworth Lake; and Conserving and enhancing townscape character.

2. We will protect the borough's heritage by:

Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and non-statutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:

i. Four outstanding conservation areas: Central Rochdale, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and Rock Nook / Summit;

ii. Other designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments;
iii. The heritage of the Co-operative movement, the Rochdale Pioneers and the Labour movement;
iv. The Edgar Wood and J. H. Sellers cultural heritage;
v. The heritage of the seventeenth and eighteenth century vernacular tradition; and vi. The engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways.

Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration;

Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and

Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard."

Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (2006)

The Rochdale Local Plan (Unitary Development Plan) was adopted in June 2006 and forms the policy period between 1999 and 2016. In relation to the design criteria for new development, Policy BE/2 states that:

"Development proposals will be required to demonstrate good design by:

a) Ensuring that they are compatible with or improve their surroundings by virtue of their scale, density, height, massing, layout, materials, architectural style and detail and means of enclosure;

b) Creating visual interest in areas or buildings lacking character;



- c) *Taking opportunities to retain, enhance or create views, landmarks and other townscape features which make a material contribution to the character of the area and reveal such features to public view;*
- d) *Retaining and enhancing the architectural or historic qualities and features of buildings of character;*
- e) *Appropriate treatment of open spaces between and around buildings, including the provision of landscaping as an integral part of the development layout;*
- f) *Retaining key natural features, including trees, as part of the landscaping of the site;*
- g) *Providing for safe and convenient access and circulation;*
- h) *Minimising opportunities for crime against people or property;*
- i) *Making adequate provision for natural light within and between buildings;*
- j) *Minimising the potential environmental impact of and on the development, including noise, air and water pollution."*

Policy G/BE/9 sets out the policy for the conservation of built heritage. It states the following:

"Priority will be given to the practical conservation and enhancement of those features of the built environment which are the most valuable, in particular: conservation areas; listed buildings and their settings; scheduled ancient monuments; parks and gardens of special historic interest; and archaeological remains. such buildings, areas and features of architectural and historic merit will be protected from adverse development or demolition and positive measures will be taken or supported, wherever possible, to facilitate their continued upkeep and beneficial use. particular emphasis will be placed on securing new uses for existing buildings to ensure their future, and on promoting conservation activities

which provide a stimulus for the regeneration of town centres, older urban and rural areas, including historic and cultural landscapes."

For development affecting the setting of a listed building, Policy BE/15 of the UDP requires that: *"Development will not be permitted, where through its siting, scale, design or materials, would harm the setting of a listed building."*

Guidance

National Planning Policy Guidance, 2019

Whilst not planning policy the Planning Practice Guidance provides a clear indication of the Government's approach to the application of national policy contained in the NPPF. Where there is conflict between the guidance in the PPG and earlier documents the PPG will take precedence.

Historic England Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)

This note is not a statement of Government policy but supports the implementation of national government policy. It provides advice on assessing the significance of heritage assets and the impact of proposals on that significance.

Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017)

Historic England has revised its guidance relating to setting and views of heritage assets. The guidance advocates a staged approach to assessment involving identification of the affected assets and setting, an assessment of the degree to which setting and views contribute to the significance of the assets, an assessment of the effects of the proposed development, exploration of ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm and the monitoring of outcomes.

The revised guidance clarifies that there is a distinction between views that contribute to heritage significance and views that might be valued for reasons of landscape character or visual amenity. It states that the extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an



asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places.

The guidance makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, rather its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the relevant heritage asset itself. The guidance sets out the need for a systematic and staged approach to assessing the impact of development proposals in the setting of a heritage asset. It confirms that such assessment should be based on an understanding of the significance of the heritage assets affected and then the contribution of setting to that significance.

Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019)

The guidance covers the NPPF requirement for applicants for heritage and other consents to describe heritage significance to help local planning authorities to make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets. Understanding the significance of heritage assets, in advance of developing proposals for their buildings and sites, enables owners and applicants to receive effective, consistent and timely decisions. The advice note explores the assessment of significance of heritage assets as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal(s).





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