

HERITAGE & CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Application Details

Heritage, Conservation & Design team officer

Catherine Fenghour

Date

10 August 2026

Application reference

PL/2026/0549

Address

206 to 208 Drake Street, Rochdale, OL16 1PJ

Proposal

Residential development comprising 27 affordable dwellings, including one apartment building (three storey) containing 23 apartments and a terrace (2.5 storey) of four family houses, together with associated external works.

Affected Heritage Assets

Designated heritage assets

- Broadfield Park (Registered Park and Garden – grade II)
- Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area
- Statue of Alderman Ashworth (grade II)

Non-designated heritage assets

- Beech House School, Church Stile

Summary

The principle of development is supported in heritage terms. However, further work is required on the design and material palette to ensure a neutral impact on neighbouring heritage assets.

Assessment

Site description and significance

The application site is a vacant parcel of land, bordering onto Drake Street, St Albans Street and Broadfield Stile. The site lies directly to the south of Broadfield Park, which is a registered Park and Garden (grade II) and close to the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area. Broadfield Park and

Sparrow Hill Slopes were laid out on former glebe land acquired by the Rochdale Corporation in 1860. Broadfield Slopes were added to the Park in the 1890s. The western portion of the Park, which is closest to the site, has large sunken lawns with elaborate ornamental bedding. At the centre of the lawns lies the statue of Alderman G L Ashworth (grade II) erected in 1878. There is an entrance to Broadfield Park along Broadfield Stile, marked by Stone Gate Piers. This footpath links through, providing a connection to Sparrow Hill to the north. To the east of the site lies Beech House School. This attractive two storey red brick building dates from the second half of the 19th century and is depicted on the 1890s OS map:



Relevant legislation and planning policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66(1) - 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.

Section 72(1) – this requires local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2025)

Chapter 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraphs 212 to 215 set out the approach for assessing the impact of developments on designated heritage assets. While great weight should be given to an asset's preservation, any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification. Where a proposal would result in less than

substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against any public benefits stemming from the proposal.

The impact of a development on a non-designated heritage asset is also a material planning consideration (para 216). A balanced judgement should be had, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

Places for Everyone (PfE)

Policy JP-P2 seeks to positively conserve, sustain and enhance the plan area's historic environment. This policy confirms that proposals affecting heritage assets will be assessed having regard to national planning policy.

Rochdale Core Strategy (CS)

Policy P2 relates to protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage. This policy seeks to conserve, enhance and promote key heritage assets (which include the borough's designated heritage assets), as well as conserving and enhancing heritage assets of local interest (non-designated heritage assets).

Assessment of proposals

The proposal is for the redevelopment of this vacant site for residential purposes. It includes a three-storey apartment block on Drake Street and four terraced houses fronting onto Broadfield Stile. Car parking and refuse storage for the apartments would be accessed off St Albans Street.

Historically there were two detached properties on the site. On the 1850 town plan, they are named as Castlefield House and Broadfield. Based on Google Earth imagery, these appear to have been demolished circa 2005, as they are present on the 2003 aerial photograph of the site. The site has been vacant since this time. In heritage terms, there is no objection to the principle of development on this vacant site. Its redevelopment offers an opportunity to reestablish the built frontage on this prominent site on one of the key routes in the town, and on the edge of the Conservation Area and Broadfield Park.

Drake Street developed to link the town centre with the canal basin, in the late 18th century. Many of the buildings in the wider Drake Street date from the early 19th century, and while unsympathetic alterations have taken place, their Regency character is still apparent in their architecture and materials. The historic street layout is also still clearly legible. The now demolished houses on the site would have been part of the development which took place following the arrival of the canal. While the area started to develop in the early 19th century, many of the surviving buildings surrounding the site date from the second half of the 19th century. By the late 19th century, the street pattern and built form was largely as it is experienced today.

Houses within the surrounding area are largely two-storey, built in red brick with shallow, hipped slate roofs. Many of the properties include stone detailing around windows and doors, as well as in some cases stone banding separating the ground and first floors. There are also some modern buildings, including the adjacent garage, which is a flat roofed corrugated metal and brick structure.

The submitted streetscene elevations and sections indicate that the three-storey block would be broadly similar in height to the two-storey houses on the south side of Drake Street (there is a change in height in the terrace opposite and it is assumed that the apartment block is being shown in relation to the tallest houses in the terrace - but clarification should be sought on this). The proposed apartment block would be slightly taller than the houses along Broadfield Stile, including Beech House, which sits on the corner of Broadfield Stile and St Albans Street, and has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset.

It is considered that while the apartment block is shown to be three-storey, it would not appear disproportionately tall in the context of the wider streetscene. The height of the proposed terraced houses is also considered appropriate.

The proposed apartment block would have a deeper footprint than many of the terraced properties. However, the double piled design and roofs would help to break up and reduce the apparent massing of the apartment block. The front elevation is also shown to include brick detailing, which would reference the narrow frontages of the terraced houses. It is important that this detailing is achieved by recessing the brickwork (rather than by a colour change). The scale and massing of the proposed terraced housing is considered appropriate to the context.

It is important that the northern elevation of the terrace is treated as a secondary principal elevation, as it would front onto St Alban's Street and Broadfield Park. This elevation requires further work to ensure that it presents an active frontage. Further work is also required on the principal elevations onto Broadfield, and particularly the pattern of fenestration. The applicant should continue to work with the Council's Urban Design Officer to refine the scheme's design.

Indicative details of materials have been provided. A red brick is proposed, alongside a buff brick to provide detailing. There are concerns regarding the use of a buff brick in this location, where it is not characteristic. An alternative would be to use stone to provide the contrast, limiting this to a band separating ground and first floor and window and door details, as well as the copings on the parapets.

A sample panel of the brick should be required by condition, as should sample of the roof slates. It is noted that an artificial slate is proposed. A natural slate should be used, as this would offer better weathering. If an artificial slate is to be used, it is essential that samples are requested and this would need to be robustly justified.

Details of the solar panels should be required by condition. These should be inset into the roof slope, to minimise their appearance.

Windows are shown to be aluminium and details of these should be required by condition. Details of doors should also be required by condition.

Around the boundaries of the site, elements of the historic walls remain. Along Drake Street, elements of the sandstone wall plinth survive. While there is evidence for railings, these have been lost. The submitted plan shows the sandstone to be reinstated where lost. This is welcomed. A sample should be required by condition.

Along Broadfield Stile remnants of a brick wall survive, although elements of it have been lost. The proposals to reinstate the brick wall along this boundary are supported, subject to appropriate details.

Along St Albans Street, there is a mix of a sandstone block wall and a red brick wall. The proposals show the sandstone wall to be reduced to 1m in height. Is the applicant able to provide the justification for this (i.e. visibility splays)? A method statement for the lowering and rebuilding works should be required. It is noted that the red brick wall is shown to be removed. Is it possible to retain this and reduce as necessary for visibility splays?

Internally to the site, some buff brick walls are proposed. Given that the area is dominated by sandstone and red brick walls, it is considered that a red brick wall would be more appropriate.

Details of hard and soft landscaping should be required by condition.

Other matters

Given the previous development on the site, it is recommended that GMAAS be consulted, in relation to potential archaeological remains.

Conclusions

There are no heritage objections to the principle of redeveloping this site, which lies in a prominent location close to Broadfield Park and the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area.

The submitted information indicates that the apartment block and terraced housing would not be unduly disproportionate in scale or massing to the surrounding development. Further development is required on the design and elevations, and the applicant should continue to work with the Urban Design Officer in this regard.

It is important that a high-quality palette of natural materials is used throughout the development and that these materials are appropriate to the context. Samples of materials should be required by condition.

Subject to resolving the above matters, it is considered that a neutral impact on the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets could be achieved.

Re-consultation

Yes