

# MIDDLETON TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

## MANAGEMENT PLAN



ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL





Redcroft and Fencegate, Rochdale Road (1891) is a very early Arts & Crafts design by Edgar Wood

Original draft copy November 2010

Public Consultation 15th November - 6th December 2010

Amended copy December 2010

Peter Rowlinson, Head of Service, Planning and Regulation, Rochdale MBC

Middleton & Edgar Wood THI Team, Development Control Service, PO Box 32,  
Telegraph House, Baillie Street, Rochdale, OL16 1JH Telephone: 01706 924352



# Summary

The Management Plan for the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area outlines a range of proposals for the different 'character' and 'theme' areas of the Conservation Area. Taken together, they can be summarised in the following way:

- Repair historic buildings and reinstate their original features through grants and development management.
- Improve the main public spaces including, Middleton Gardens, Old Burial Ground & Jubilee Park and Long Street/Rochdale Road.
- Enhance pedestrian links between the shopping centre and the Golden Cluster heritage area.
- Ensure new development enhances the Conservation Area and take statutory action against unauthorised development that detracts from the historic character of the area.
- Remove eyesores, using statutory powers where necessary.
- With local people, continue studying and celebrating the heritage of the Conservation Area
- Develop local training initiatives in conservation and traditional building skills.
- Create a series of heritage trails: Golden Cluster Heritage Trail, Historic Schools Trail, Edgar Wood Architecture Trail and Cotton, Silk & Sam Bamford Industrial Heritage Trail.





Middleton Parish Church of St. Leonard - a grade I listed medieval church

## Introduction

This Management Plan complements existing national and local planning policies. Conservation Areas are made under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which specifies that:

“It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.”

It is a strategy to preserve, and where appropriate enhance, the significance of the conservation area which is identified by the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (2008) and in the statement of significance found on pX.

The recommendations contained within the Management Plan will guide the intelligent management of change within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area by paying due regard to the area’s special character and interest.

In May 2010, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) approved the Stage 1 submission for the Middleton and Edgar Wood Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). It awarded Middleton over £2 million, the largest THI to be approved nationwide. With this money the Council aims to fund conservation projects to the Edgar Wood and other historic buildings. The THI also plans improvements to Middleton Gardens, Jubilee Park and The Old Burial Ground and to celebrate Middleton's famous people, such as Cardinal Langley, Sam Bamford and, of course, Edgar Wood. Consequently, this is an appropriate time to formulate and publish proposals for the Conservation Area.

The aims of the THI are as follows:

- Conserve the beauty of Middleton's historic buildings and townscape;
- Work closely with the public, voluntary sector and other partners;
- Increase local heritage skills through training;
- Improve knowledge of Middleton's heritage; and,
- Encourage people to visit Middleton.

This Management Plan gives an overview of the Council's management proposals for the conservation area and tries to avoid repeating a number of existing Council documents:

- Middleton Town Centre Spatial Masterplan (2006);
- Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (January 2008); and,
- Middleton & Edgar Wood Townscape Heritage Initiative Stage One Supporting Document (November 2009).

The Middleton Town Centre Spatial Masterplan deals with the larger strategic developments affecting the whole town centre and is currently being updated. The Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal assessed the special historic and architectural interest of the conservation area. It proposed a number of boundary extensions which have since been implemented. The Middleton & Edgar Wood THI Stage One Supporting Document accompanied the Council's successful Lottery bid and outlines the strategy and projects of the THI. This is currently being developed for a Stage Two submission at the end of 2010. These documents are available in pdf form by emailing the Council. Paper copies can be viewed at Jubilee Library, Middleton.

# Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area

## Statement of Significance

This statement of significance summarises the special interest of the Conservation Area under 5 themes:

1. A long and varied history;
2. The medieval parish church;
3. The Golden Cluster;
4. Edgar Wood;
5. Education provision and reform.

The Appraisal Area Appraisal should be referred to for additional, more detailed analysis of the Conservation Area's special character and interest. The inherent interest and beauty of the area is held back by the poor condition of some of the buildings and open spaces. The management plan therefore seeks changes to enable the heritage to fulfil its real potential for the benefit the local community and visitors.

### 1. A long and varied history

Middleton has a surprisingly full and varied heritage for a town of its size. "Middleton" is a Saxon place name and Long Street is thought to be on the line of a Roman road linking Chester to York, but evidence suggests a history going back even further, to the Neolithic period. Middleton's rich history means there is significant potential for further archaeological study and discovery within Middleton.

The buildings, structures and artefacts within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area have strong links to important historical figures and events:

- Saint Cuthbert (c634-687); who's body rested in the Parish Church by monks fleeing Viking intrusions into Northumberland.
- Cardinal Langley (1363-1437), Lord Chancellor of England; who built the Parish Church in 1412 as a gesture of thanks towards his birthplace.
- The Middleton Archers and the Battle of Flodden (1513); the last great medieval battle in the British Isles.
- Alexander Nowell (c1507-1602); Dean of St Paul's Cathedral and prominent puritan.
- Samuel Bamford (1788-1872); writer, radical and Peterloo veteran

- Julia Salis Schwabe (1819-1896), 19<sup>th</sup> Century educational reformer.
- Fred Jackson (1859-1918) and James William Booth (1867–1953), Middleton artists and prominent Staithes Group members.
- Edgar Wood (1860-1935); flamboyant Arts and Crafts architect and modern movement pioneer.

## **2. The Medieval Parish Church**

St Leonard's Church, a striking Grade I listed building, boasts an unusual timber framed extension to its tower and a wonderful medieval porch. It was recently claimed by the BBC to be the oldest building in Greater Manchester. The church's architecture and fittings are outstanding and include the oldest war memorial in England; the Flodden Window, important brasses and fine examples of twentieth century glass.

## **3. The Golden Cluster**

Middleton has a rich and varied architectural history. The town is not dominated by any one period or style of architecture, which creates a diverse and interesting townscape. Unusually, there is maybe only one example from each period or style, but significantly these examples are exceptional. The 'Golden Cluster' is a rare concentration of outstanding heritage at the heart of the Conservation Area; centred on the Grade I listed Parish Church.

It includes 3 Grade II\* buildings: the Old Boar's Head P.H. (1632) and Sessions House (mid C18); Edgar Wood's first masterpiece the Long Street Methodist Church and Schools (1899) and the Queen Elizabeth Old Grammar School (1586). There are many grade II and locally listed buildings including the Old Rectory (1500s), Providence Congregational Chapel (1859), Jubilee Library (1887) and Edgar Wood's former Manchester & Salford bank (1892). These buildings are linked by a large area of green space that incorporates the Old Burial Ground, Jubilee Park and the areas around St Leonard's Church.

The architecture of the older vernacular buildings was the inspiration for many Victorian buildings including the Library, National School on Long Street and much of Edgar Wood's work; which have since become valued historic buildings in their own right.

## **4. Edgar Wood**

Edgar Wood (1860-1935) was a Middletonian who became a particularly important Arts and Crafts architect. Many of his buildings were at the cutting edge of British and European avant-garde design and the most important group lies in Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. Middleton's legacy of Edgar Wood's buildings is exceptional and unique in its range and number and in tracing the evolution of Victorian domestic



design to the early twentieth century Modern Movement. The scale and range of this architectural inheritance is simply outstanding.

## **5. Education provision and reform**

Middleton has a strong tradition of education provision. From the early chantry school built as part of Cardinal Langley's parish church in 1412 to those of the nineteenth century, the conservation area has five listed schools covering the history of school development from medieval to modern times.

The chantry school was re-founded by Alexander Nowell as The Queen Elizabeth Grammar School (Grade II\*) which was attached to Brasenose College Oxford. The Parish or National School began in 1791 and moved to new premises on Long Street in 1842 (Grade II).

Julia Salis Schwabe was a 19<sup>th</sup> century educational reformer and proponent of the Froebel system of education. It is thought that as a friend of Edgar Wood, she influenced his designs of educational buildings, which all show a progressive approach to school architecture that centres the design on the children's needs and experiences. Edgar Wood's pioneering school architecture can be seen at Long Street Methodist Schools and the board schools of Durnford Street (Grade II) and Elm Street (Grade II\* Elm Street falls outside the conservation area boundary) are nationally important exemplars, with the first published both in Germany and California as a leading school design.

## **6. C19th Social and Industrial History**

Although wool and cotton was also manufactured in Middleton, the strength of the town's silk industry is notable. Limited knowledge, materials and processes made silk throwing and weaving a late development in England, but it was introduced to Middleton through the Mellalieu who are remembered in Mellalieu Street in the conservation area. They were part of the French Huguenot community of silk weavers. Two mills and several silk weavers cottages survive in the conservation area. These contrast with two early-mid period cotton factories, a spinning mill and a weaving shed and a pair of cotton weaver's cottages with cellar loomshops. Highly visible but just outside the conservation area is Warwick Mill, a mighty late spinning mill by Stotts of Oldham.

Samuel Bamford, a prominent writer, reformer and Peterloo veteran, showed sympathy with the conditions of the working class. He lived, worked and wrote in Middleton and is buried in the Old Burial Ground, where there is also a monument dedicated to him. Middleton Local Studies Centre holds flag carried by Bamford's contingent at Peterloo and is the only surviving Peterloo flag.

## **Creating a Conservation Culture**

Over the decades, the historic and attractive character of the conservation area has been eroded. If people are unaware of the nature and significance of their local heritage, they will not value it or be inclined to protect it. Even well intentioned property owners or contractors can make ill-informed choices about historic properties, if they are not knowledgeable about traditional building techniques. The THI offers opportunities to provide training to property owners and promote a conservation culture through greater understanding and celebration of Middleton's heritage.

Middleton has a uniquely organised and passionate contingent of civic and heritage groups. They work tirelessly to promote Middleton's heritage and the intrinsic value in conserving it. However, the membership of such groups is skewed towards the older generations. It is a concern that the knowledge and work of these groups may be lost if there aren't younger recruits to pass the baton onto in the future. It is therefore essential to the long term future of the Conservation Area to make its heritage relevant and accessible to those who will inherit this remarkable asset.

Owners are often unaware of the requirement for planning permission or don't have access to good design advice. Although the local authority can take enforcement action to improve design, historic fabric is a finite resource and once it is lost the historic authenticity is undermined. A Conservation Guide for Middleton will be produced in 2011, available to all property owners and available online. Following the THI, the plan proposes that owners are given an advice pack on how to properly maintain their historic Edgar Wood buildings. The Council also provides free design advice for owners.

Owners of unlisted dwelling houses can make certain alterations to their properties without the need for planning permission. These are called 'permitted development rights.' Whilst the changes were legal, the removal of historic features within some of the most treasured buildings in the conservation area is not desirable as this has gradually eroded the special character of the area. The local authority can introduce Article 4 Directions which restrict certain permitted development right within conservation areas. The Heritage Lottery Fund requires Article 4 Directions to protect the public investment given through THI grants. Before an Article 4 Direction is introduced in Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area, there will be consultation with residents.

### **"Character" and "Theme Areas"**

Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area is a varied and diverse area. Consequently, the plan divides the conservation area into a number of "theme" and "character" areas. To some extent, these blend into one another so it can be difficult to say exactly where the boundary between one area and another actually lies. Nevertheless, they are a useful way of defining the conservation area and

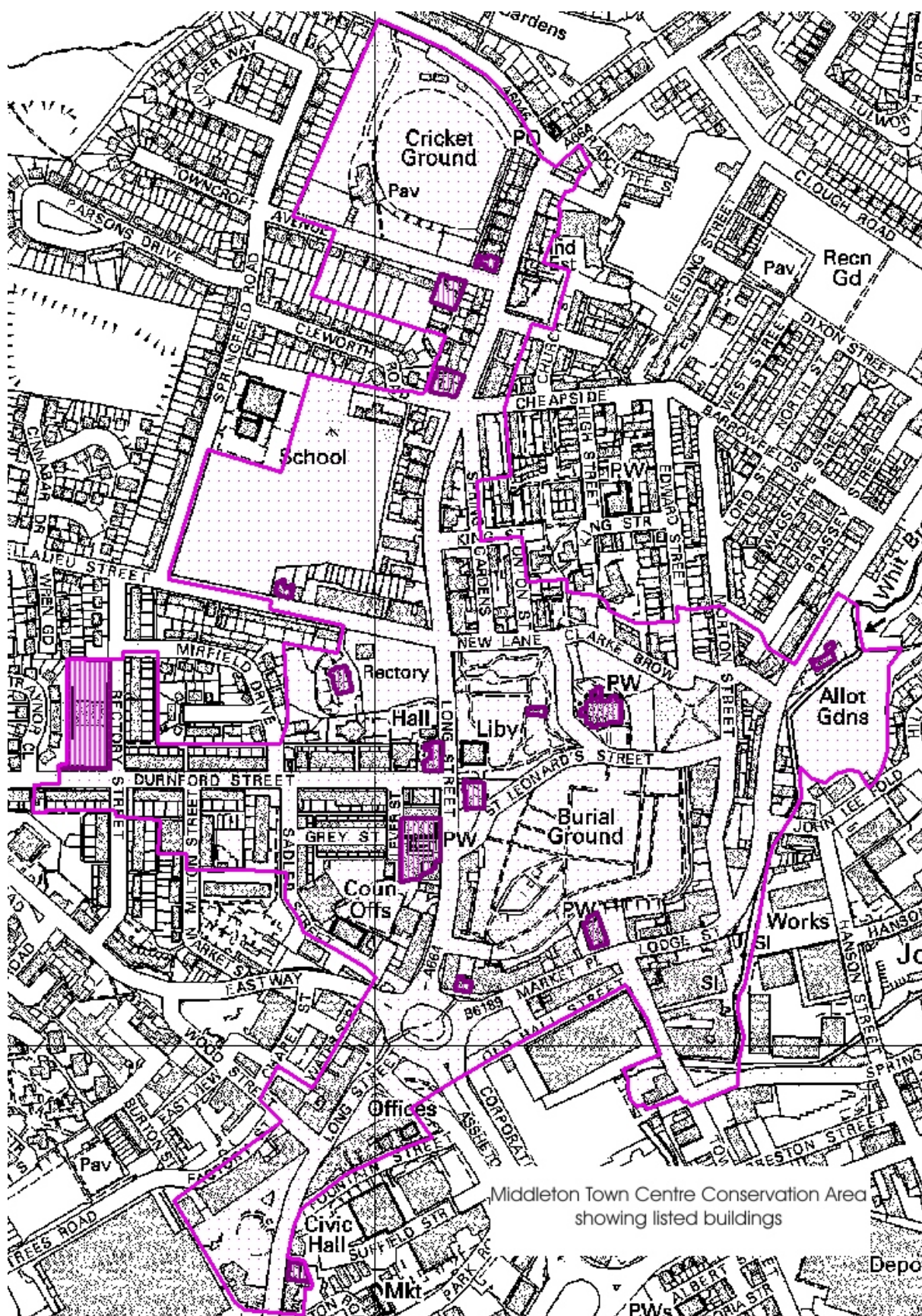
structuring the proposals of the Management Plan. The theme and character areas are:

Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area is a varied and diverse area. Consequently, the plan divides the conservation area into a number of "theme" and "character" areas. To some extent, these blend into one another so it can be difficult to say exactly where the boundary between one area and another actually lies. Nevertheless, they are a useful way of defining the conservation area and structuring the proposals of the Management Plan. The theme and character areas are:

<b>Middleton Parish Church</b>	P
<b>Hill &amp; Green Space</b> - John Lee Fold Allotments, Clarke Brow, Churchyard, Old Burial Ground, Jubilee Park, Old Rectory Gardens, Parish School Playing Field and Towncroft Cricket Ground	P
<b>The Golden Cluster</b> -	P
<b>Edgar Wood Heritage</b> - Long Street Methodist Church & School and the other Edgar Wood Buildings	P
<b>Traditional Shopping Streets</b> - Long Street, Market Place and Middleton Gardens	P
<b>Cotton Mills and Workshops</b> - Lodge Street and Townley Street	P
<b>Terraced Streets</b> - Durnford Street, Grey Street, Sadler Street, Rectory Street and Milton Street	P
<b>Cottages, Silk Mills &amp; Middle Class Houses</b> - Rochdale Road, Spring Gardens, Union Street and Towncroft Avenue	P

•













Middleton Parish Church seen from the Old Burial Ground

## Middleton Parish Church

At the heart of the conservation area lies Saint Leonard's church raised up on a small hill with panoramic views across the Manchester area. The church building is approaching its 600th anniversary (erected 1412), though a church has been on the site for around a thousand years. The grade I listed building is of the highest significance to Middleton and richly endowed with art and archaeology. Its medieval tower is topped with a unique timber belfry that makes it one of the most identifiable churches in the region.

The church and site are well maintained by the wardens and congregation and are open for visitors and tourists two days a week during the summer months. In this and many other examples, the plan recognises the key role the voluntary sector in the management of the historic assets of the conservation area and that, from time to time, it may need the support of public or private institutions.

The visual presence of the church in the town centre has declined with the un-managed growth of self-seeded sycamore and other saplings around the slopes of the hill. Many have now grown into young trees that obscure the church and tower from the rest of the town centre. A management scheme to improve the Old Burial Ground and Jubilee Park aims to address this problem.

The fabric of the church is well cared for but is suffering from rapid stone decay on some elevations, probably associated with cement mortar used on the church around 40 years ago. The decay is such that the medieval detailing and inscriptions on the

south elevation are disappearing. A scheme of conservation works is needed to address this.

One of the treasures of the church is the Flodden Window, which celebrates the role of the Middleton Archers in the Battle of Flodden (1513). This outstanding medieval monument appears to be fading and is need of conservation work and possible relocation to a north-facing elevation.

The history and archaeology of the church has not been studied for some time and the management plan encourages new research and study leading to a better interpretation of the building.

The setting of the church, especially around the car park is somewhat uninviting and would benefit from sensitive enhancements that improve the feeling of history, comfort and enclosure.

Middleton Parish Church Draft Management Proposals		
Management Scheme	Proposed Agency	Proposed Timescale
Open up historic views to church	Rochdale MBC	Within 5 years
Conserve decaying external stonework	Parish Church and Heritage Lottery Fund Churches Grant	Within 5 years
Conserve Flodden Window	Parish Church and Heritage Lottery Fund Churches Grant	Within 5 years
Research & interpret the building	THI and voluntary action	Within 5 years



Stone erosion on the south elevation



Birds-eye view of Long Street showing : Jubilee Library & Park (middle left), National School (centre) and the Old Burial Ground (top right)

## Hill and Green Space

**John Lee Fold Allotments, Clarke Brow, Churchyard, Church Brow & St. Leonard's Street, Old Burial Ground, Jubilee Park, Old Rectory Gardens, Parish School Playing Field and Towncroft Cricket Ground.**

For most of its history, Middleton was a rural area with agricultural townships stretching northwards and westwards as far as Bury and Bolton. Only after the 1820s did the town begin to develop with much happening quite recently in the twentieth century. This late development has left a swathe of historic green space running roughly south-east to north-west across the conservation area.

The east-to-west axis of Bardsley Street, Clarke Brow, New Lane and Mellalieu Street links the open spaces, except for the Towncroft Cricket Ground which is slightly detached to the north. These areas are a reminder of Middleton's recent rural past, provide the setting for the buildings of the Golden Cluster and are characterful places in their own right. The careful conservation of this green space is an important element of the management plan. The areas of hill and green space are outlined below.



## **John Lee Fold Allotments**

In the east John Lee Fold Allotments lie adjacent Whit Brook and the Old Grammar School. The allotments are on the land once used by the Middleton Archers to practice and are well kept but with some areas that need reclamation from lack of use. The area adjacent the brook has recently developed a problem of flooding which noticeably impacts on the Old Grammar School.

## **Clarke Brow**

West of the Old Grammar School, the land rises steeply up Clarke Brow towards the parish church where there are two separate areas which form a single open space:

- a lawned area with paths and trees adjacent Morton Street where some tree removal is needed to open up the space and allow better views of the church; and,
- a steep grassed play area north of the church has archaeological potential. It requires repairs and improvements to its railings and boundaries.



The sense of arrival at Middleton Parish Church is poor, partly because the trees are badly located.

## **Church Yard, Church Brow and St. Leonard's Street**

The well maintained church yard stands high behind a sub-oval retaining wall, the shape suggesting an Anglo-Saxon origin. An eastern extension to the churchyard has considerable historic interest but is in need of an ongoing maintenance regime.

There is a fine young oak tree that blocks a "picture postcard" view of the church and tower just at the point of arrival from the car park. This requires a decision on whether to remove the tree while it is relatively young to allow the view or accept it as a permanent arrangement on the grounds of the individual quality of the tree. The setting of the car park is somewhat open and uninviting and would benefit from sensitive enhancements that improve the feeling of history, comfort and enclosure.

Like the Clarke Brow play area, the church yard and car park have archaeological potential to be explored.



The Old Burial Ground has considerable potential as an attractive open space

Immediately to the south lies Church Brow and St. Leonard's Street. This is a single lane running over the hill separating the Old Burial Ground to the south from the Church Yard and Jubilee Park to the north. The lane does not reach its potential as an attractive place because of lack of maintenance and inappropriate repairs to the wall and ground surfaces. At the bottom of Church Brow, there is a parking problem that, at times, makes access difficult. Parking restrictions are proposed to keep the carriageway free and allow the reopening of the historic entrance to the Old Burial Ground.



Ye Olde Boar's Head and Jubilee Library with Jubilee Park in the background. The green space engulfs Long Street at this point.

### **Middleton Old Burial Ground**

The windswept hillside that forms Middleton Old Burial Ground was formerly a warren before becoming Middleton council's first burial ground in the nineteenth century. It is the one open space in the conservation area suffering significantly from vandalism and lack of maintenance. Very few people currently visit and enjoy this outstanding open space despite it being adjacent to the commercial centre. The management plan proposes a co-ordinated programme of improvements:

- access and security improvements;
- wall and monument repairs;
- footpath maintenance;
- self-seeded tree removal;
- encourage wildlife;
- improved connections to the town centre; and,
- promotion.



## **Jubilee Park**

Jubilee Park is well maintained but not very well used due in part to the fear of anti-social behaviour. The future role of the park along with Jubilee Library needs consideration. There are problems with access and parking. Some tree management and footpath repairs are needed and the aspect towards the parish church needs opening up so the church is better seen.

Currently, there is no direct connection between the park and burial ground so that neither supports the other. The connection of the two by reinstating a lost entrance to the Old Burial ground on Church Brow and linking this to the park is part of the management plan.

The park opens out onto Long Street at this point. Shops give way to set-piece historic architecture including Jubilee Library, Long Street Church and Ye Olde Boar's Head PH. They sit amongst mature trees as the Green space sweeps across the road to the Old Rectory Gardens and Mellalieu Street. This stretch of Long Street is a most important focal point of the conservation area and great care needs to be taken in the management and articulation of space and buildings.

At the junction of Long Street and Durnford Street there is a group of neglected buildings that dramatically detracts from the appearance of the conservation area. It is considered under the Golden Cluster heading below.

## **Old Rectory Gardens**

These wooded gardens belonged to the medieval moated Old Rectory. Today, most of the gardens belong to the 1960s replacement Rectory and are a major contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. They are currently in need of a role and a significant area to the south is becoming overgrown. The southern boundary with Ye Olde Boar's Head car park is not well defined, while the car park could be improved aesthetically.

## **Parish School Playing Field**

Immediately to the north of the Old Rectory Gardens is an open space of a different character but historically connected. It is the largest remnant of the glebe fields of the Old Rectory which characterised the west side of Long Street and Rochdale Road until the mid-twentieth century. They occupy a large flat site backing onto the houses of Rochdale Road and opening out onto Mellalieu Street. The perimeter is characterised by semi-mature trees lined behind iron railings, both needing a little management and maintenance. The playing field could be enhanced by small amounts of tree planting around the school to enhance the natural feel.



## **Towncroft Cricket Ground**

The picturesque cricket ground is the home of Middleton Cricket Club which settled there in 1889. Behind the edging of mature trees, there is the characteristic cricket ground rounded shape with a focal point of the Edgar Wood designed pavilion. It is the most northern of the historic open spaces.



Middleton Parish School Playing Field

<b>Hill and Green Space Draft Management Proposals</b>		
Management Scheme	Proposed Agency	Proposed Timescale
Ongoing enhancements and reclamation of old plots at John Lee Fold Allotments	John Lee Fold Allotments	No Timescale
Whit Brook investigate flood amelioration	Old Grammar School	No Timescale
Clarke Brow area tree management	Rochdale MBC	Within 5 years
Clarke Brow Playground repair railings	Rochdale MBC	Within 5 years
Churchyard, church car park and Clarke Brow Playground - assessment of archaeological potential	Rochdale MBC/Middleton Parish Church	No Timescale
Eastern Extension to Churchyard, maintenance plan	Middleton Parish Church	Within 5 years
Enhancements to the setting of the church car park and the view to the church	Middleton Parish Church	No Timescale
Parking restrictions on Church Brow to encourage access along the lane and the Old Burial Ground entrance to be reopened.	Rochdale MBC	Within 3 years
Middleton Old Burial Ground: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access and security improvements;</li> <li>• wall and monument repairs;</li> <li>• footpath maintenance;</li> <li>• self-seeded tree removal;</li> <li>• improved connections to the town centre; and,</li> <li>• promotion.</li> </ul>	Rochdale MBC	Within 3 years
Jubilee Park enhancements to paths, trees and parking. Address reasons for lack of use.	Rochdale MBC	Within 3 years
Create a direct link between Jubilee Park and the Old Burial Ground	Rochdale MBC	Within 3 years
Tree management scheme and consideration of role for the Old Rectory Gardens	Middleton Parish Church/Rochdale MBC	Within 5 years
Parish School Playing Field - maintenance of railings and tree management and limited planting	Middleton Parish Church School/Rochdale MBC	No Timescale



Middleton Old Grammar School adjacent Whit Brook

## Golden Cluster

The term “Golden Cluster” refers to the exceptional series of historic buildings that are clustered below the Parish Church, mostly around the base of the hill on Long Street and Market Place. In addition to the grade I listed church, there are three more “outstanding” listed buildings, Middleton Old Grammar School, Long Street Methodist Church and School and Ye Olde Boar’s Head PH (all Grade II\*). Outstanding listed buildings are counted amongst the top eight per cent of all listed buildings nationally.

There are a further six grade II listed buildings, ten local list grade 1 buildings (LL1) and eleven local list grade 2 buildings (LL2). The table on page X summarises the wide variety of building types, dates, architectural styles and building materials.

Same day visitors are the dominant form of tourism in this region. The four outstanding listed buildings of the cluster are open for public access, though three require volunteers to open them up. All have car parks and toilets and, together, could provide a very interesting attraction for visitors to Middleton. They have the potential to add a new dimension to Middleton town centre. The remaining buildings should also be of interest to visitors via a heritage trail of the Golden Cluster.

The conservation and management of the Golden Cluster buildings are of the highest importance and one of the principal aims of the THI grants scheme. When considering

developments and changes to these buildings, the Council will consider their importance to the cluster as well as their individual merit.

The depth of interest in the cluster is considerable and a number of other more specialist trails should be developed outwards to other parts of the conservation area. Blue plaques should be designed to identify the historic buildings on the trails. This would allow casual tourists without a printed leaflet to explore Middleton's heritage and raise awareness with local people. Further signage and tourist fingerposts within the conservation area needs to be considered through a coordinated strategy.

### **St. Leonard's Church and Old Burial Ground Trail**

This trail could be a classic "church crawler's" trail around the inside and outside of the church and around the monuments of the church yard and Old Burial Ground. An initial guide to the church has already been produced.

### **Historic Schools Trail**

Uniquely, the conservation area contains schools from every period of English history and a trail would show how school buildings and education have changed over 600 years. The key building of the trail is the Old Grammar School which is a remarkably early school building, one of the oldest in northern England. Its history has been researched and the building conserved but the building is currently searching for a new role that allows it to pay its way. Part of the building has potential to be a small museum on Middleton's heritage. The trail would link the following schools:

St. Leonard's Chantry School 1412 (Medieval Era);

Old Grammar School 1586 (Renaissance Era);

National School 1791 and 1842 (Enlightenment Era);

Jubilee Library 1887 (Romantic Era);

Long Street Methodist Schools 1899 (Romantic Era); and,

Durnford Street & Elm Wood Schools 1909 (Early Modern Era).

### **Cotton, Silk and Sam Trail**

This trail would follow the cotton and silk industries and their impact on the lives of Middleton people as the move from countryside to town began to take place. It would include the silk and cotton mills and weavers cottages of the conservation area. It would focus on the struggle of working class people and the life of Sam



Bamford, radical and veteran of the Peterloo massacre whose monument overlooks the town.

### **Edgar Wood Trail**

This is considered in the next section.



The Sam Bamford Monument overlooks the town centre, though currently hidden by trees

## **Improvements to Long Street**

To facilitate these trails and the general comfort of the area, the Golden Cluster stretch of Long Street (around Long Street Methodist Church) would benefit from improvements to assist pedestrian comfort and the slowing down of traffic at this very sensitive location.

### **Jubilee Library**

The library is in need of repair and conservation and such a scheme is proposed in the THI. However, the building also lacks a wheel chair ramp and an internal lift and needs much improved car parking arrangements to bring the building up to present day standards. These improvements are needed whether or not the proposed moving of the library function to a new multi-use building takes place.

### **101-103 Long Street & 1-5 Durnford Street**

These buildings have steadily declined since 2004 and are currently a severe eyesore at a prominent corner of the most important stretch of Long Street. They are nevertheless historic buildings with a vital townscape function. They maintain the historic grain of the area and require urgent repair and a new use. They must not reach the point of demolition, if the character and grain of the Golden Cluster is to be preserved.

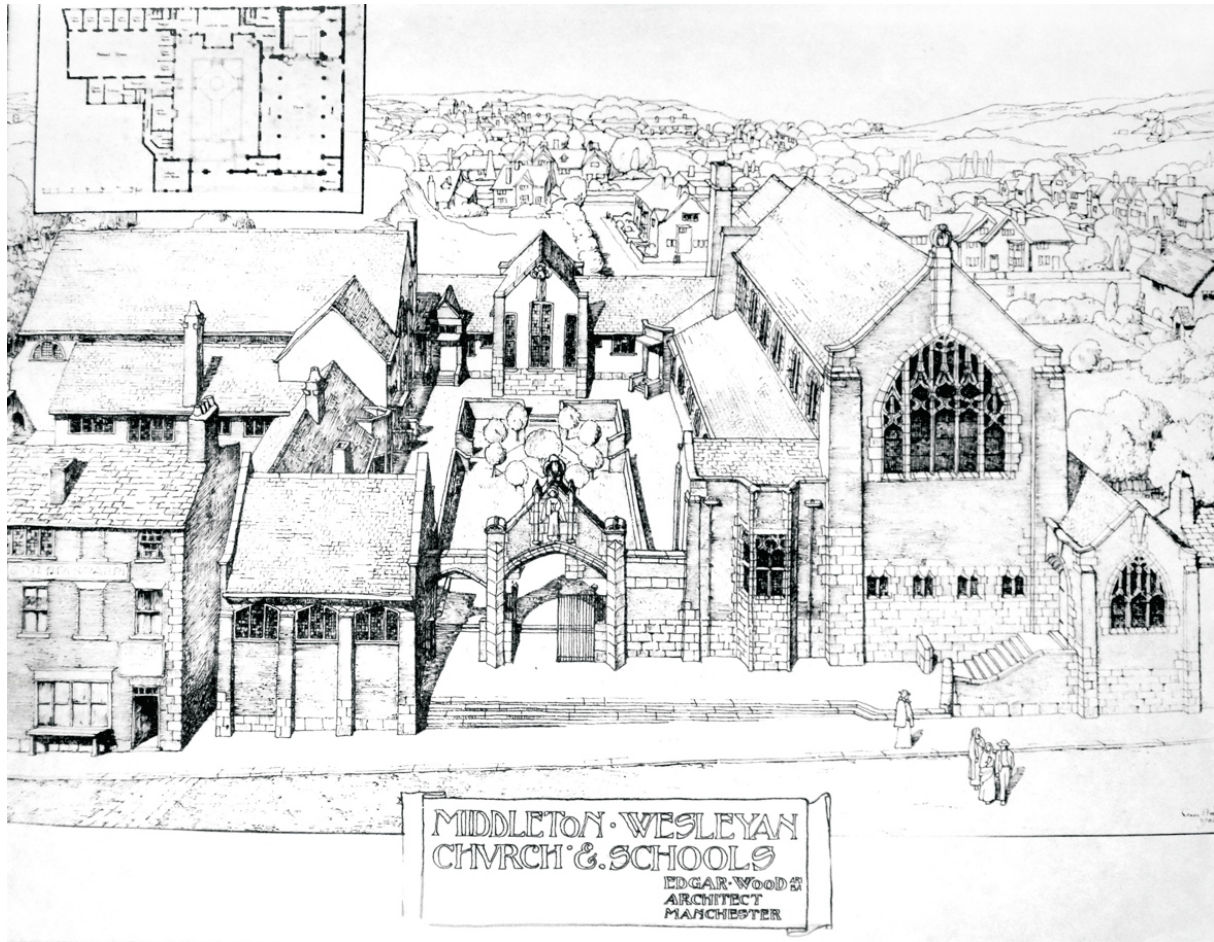


The condition of these corner buildings on Long Street undermines the Golden Cluster

<b>Golden Cluster Buildings</b>				
<i>Date</i>	<i>Building Name</i>	<i>Listed</i>	<i>Building Type</i>	<i>Building Materials</i>
1412	St. Leonard's Church	I	Medieval Church	Free stone
1500s	The Old Rectory	II	Medieval Rectory	Timber frame, brick skin
1586	Old Grammar School	II*	Elizabethan School	Rubble stone
1632	Ye Olde Boar's Head	II*	Jacobean Coaching Inn	Timber frame panelling
1700s	Sessions House	II*	Georgian Court House	Hand-made brick and stone
1780s	1-5 New Lane	LL1	Georgian Cottages	Hand-made brick
1808	Assheton Arms	L L1	Georgian Coaching Inn	Hand-made brick
1830	Conservative Club	LL1	Regency Classical Villa	Fine brick
1842	National School	II	Elizabethan Style School	Free stone
1859	Providence Congregational Chapel	II	Italianate Chapel	Polychromatic brick & stone
1873	Police Station & Magistrates Court	LL1	Gothic Revival Police Station and Courthouse	Brick and stone
1877	Sam Bamford Monument	LL1	Obelisk	Stone and Bronze
1889	Jubilee Free Library	LL1	Vernacular Revival Library	Brick, stone, timber frame and reinforced concrete
1892	Manchester & Salford Bank	II	Art Nouveau Bank	Faience (pink)
1895c	Brentwood & 2-22 Mellalieu Street	LL1 & 2	Various Freestyle middle class houses	Brick, stone, false timber frame and artificial stone
1901	Long Street Methodist Church & School	II*	Arts & Crafts Chapel & School	Brick & render
1908	Staircase and Exedra	II	Early Modern Ceremonial Stairway	Ashlar stone
1910	36 Mellalieu Street	II	Early Modern House	Brick with concrete flat roof
1910c	Royal Bank of Scotland	LL1	Baroque Freestyle Bank	Portland stone
1928	Middleton Building Society, Long Street	LL1	Classical Revival Head Office	Limestone, red brick
1931	Health Centre	LL2	Classical Revival early health centre	Roman red brick, sandstone

<b>Golden Cluster Draft Management Proposals</b>		
<i>Management Scheme</i>	<i>Proposed Agency</i>	<i>Proposed Timescale</i>
Same-day visitor strategy	Rochdale MBC, Voluntary Sector	Within 5 years
Conservation of historic buildings	THI	Within 5 years
Pedestrian Improvements to Long Street	Rochdale MBC	Within 10 years
Jubilee Library repairs and improvements	THI, Rochdale MBC	Within 5 years
101-103 Long Street & 1-5 Durnford Street, Urgent improvements	Rochdale MBC	Within 1 year
101-103 Long Street & 1-5 Durnford Street, New use and full repair	Developer/THI	Within 3 years
Historic Schools Trail	THI	Within 1 year
St. Leonard's Church and Old Burial Ground Trail	THI	Within 2 years
Golden Cluster Trail	THI	Within 3 years
Cotton, Silk & Sam Trail	THI	Within 4 years





## Edgar Wood Heritage

### Long Street Methodist Church & School and other Edgar Wood Buildings

Of huge significance to the conservation area is the architectural legacy left by Edgar Wood who was the town's unofficial architect between the years of 1884 and 1914. He left a substantial legacy of buildings including houses, churches, schools and small-scale commercial buildings. Many were at the cutting edge of British and European avant-garde domestic design. The scale and range of this architectural inheritance is simply outstanding.

Edgar Wood lived at a time of great social, scientific and technological change and his style continually evolved at the cusp of architectural change. He was England's pioneer of the style that transformed architecture - modernism. The conservation area has fifteen individual building designs that cover his whole career and are considered to be of national and potentially international importance, something which sets Middleton town centre apart from most others.

Many of these buildings require careful restoration and this is one of the principal aims of the THI and management plan. Following the THI, the plan proposes that owners are given an advice pack on how to properly maintain their historic Edgar Wood buildings. To celebrate Edgar Wood's importance to Middleton, the management plan THI seek to recreate one of his lost designs of the town centre, the diminutive timber-framed Jubilee Drinking Fountain building of 1887 that survived until the 1960s.

The Edgar Wood Trail follows his buildings the length of the conservation area, from Middleton Gardens to Rochdale Road. The trail running in "beta mode" for a few years to allow time for more research and promotion. A finalised trail will be drawn up and marketed towards the end of the THI project.

Long Street Methodist Church and Schools lies at the heart of the trail and is the most important group of Wood buildings. Nevertheless, they are at risk and urgently need repair and conservation works. The idea is to develop them as an Edgar Wood Heritage Centre run by Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust with facilities and cultural resources for visitors. Eventually, they would be open on a regular basis as the principal high street destination for the Edgar Wood and "Golden Cluster" trails.

<b>Edgar Wood Heritage Draft Management Proposals</b>		
Management Scheme	Proposed Agency	Proposed Timescale
Restoration of Edgar Wood Buildings, including Long Street Methodist Church and School	THI and Heritage Lottery Fund Churches Grant	Within 5 years
Recreate Wood's Jubilee Drinking Fountain building	THI	Within 1 year
Owner advice pack on maintaining an historic Edgar Wood building	THI	Within 5 years
Edgar Wood Heritage Centre	THI	Within 5 years
Final Edgar Wood Trail	THI	Within 5 years



The Market has brought new life to Middleton Gardens but fits awkwardly into the current design

# Traditional Shopping Streets

## Long Street, Market Place and Middleton Gardens

The shopping streets of Long Street, Market Place and Middleton Gardens comprise the most southerly of the conservation area "character areas". On Long Street it includes all the buildings and spaces south of Long Street Methodist Church and School. There is a wide range of buildings, with those at the junction of Market Place and Long Street being particularly prominent.

The most significant public space is Middleton Gardens, defining the very south of the conservation area. It was originally created in the 1930s by demolishing buildings at the junction of the Manchester Old and New Roads thus creating a triangular public space. The Gardens welcome shoppers and visitors from the Shopping Centre and the Tesco store into the conservation area. The management plan and THI include the resurfacing and redesigning of the Gardens to make them more attractive and functional.

A major road island was imposed on Market Place in the 1960s, one of the mistakes of that era. It has greatly impacted on the natural flow of the townscape and created a major pedestrian barrier at the centre of the lines of traditional shops of Long Street and Market Place. Cut off, many businesses on Market Place have closed. The Council's Spatial Masterplan proposes the removal of the island and the



reuniting of the two halves of the town centre. It would also close Market Place to through traffic. While this is a long term proposal which, by virtue of its scale, is outside of the remit of the management plan, it would nevertheless, have a major beneficial impact on the character and economy of the conservation area.

There are some other highways improvements that could assist this area by making it more friendly for pedestrians:

- improve pedestrian crossing of Eastway when on Long Street;
- improve the pedestrian route through the underpass of the island;
- make it easier to cross Long Street to access Cemetery Street and the Old Burial Ground; and,
- parking restrictions on Market Place to encourage short term parking and remove vehicles blocking the southern pavement.

Some of the shops and other buildings in this character area require repairs and enhancements and will be addressed by the THI grant scheme or a facelift scheme offering small grants for decorative improvements.



Long Street meets the Market Place traffic island

The heritage quality of this character area has suffered because of unauthorised alterations and signs to several historic shop buildings and the management plan prioritises the firm and careful management of future development. This means the likely statutory enforcement of unauthorised development, run-down buildings and visual eyesores. The Council will provide a free design advice service for owners

considering alterations and make available copies of its shop fronts guidelines and other policy advice.

There is a group of trees on the traffic island that blocks views from this area to the Sam Bamford Monument, Old Burial Ground and Middleton Parish Church. This also undermines the unity of Long Street and the town centre. Similarly, the trees obscure the prominent buildings near the corner of Market Place and Long Street, such as the Edgar Wood former bank built of striking pink terracotta. However, they do bring some much needed greenery so that a tree management scheme will carefully remove only those trees that create the problem and look to new tree planting in more suitable locations nearby to maintain the balance of greenery.

Providence Chapel is a major historic landmark building that defines the entrance into Market Place and the town centre from Townley Street. The plan seeks to stabilize the decline of the building and find an appropriate new use.

<b>Traditional Shopping Streets Draft Management Proposals</b>		
Management Scheme	Proposed Agency	Proposed Timescale
Middleton Gardens Refurbishment Scheme	Rochdale MBC/THI	Within 2 years
Highway and parking improvements	Rochdale MBC	Within 3 years
Grants scheme for the repair of buildings	THI	Within 5 years
Facelift Scheme to enhance shops	Rochdale MBC	Within 5 years
Development management & enforcement	Rochdale MBC	Continuous
Free design advice and guidance	Rochdale MBC	Continuous
Tree management scheme for traffic island	Rochdale MBC/THI	Within 2 years
Providence Chapel stabilization scheme	Rochdale MBC/Owner	Within 1 year
Providence Chapel new use and restoration	Developer/THI	Within 5 years



Lodge Mill, Townley Street

## Cotton Mills and Workshops

### Lodge Street and Townley Street

This character area is distinguished by its two quite different cotton mills, the spinning Lodge Mill and the weaving Brookside Mill. The former is a landmark building on Townley Street but only the warehouse of the latter makes its presence known. This is because Brookside Mill is designed as a weaving shed, ie. a single-storey building with northlights covering a large area. The special interest of these two mills lies in their early date and rarity and the management plan proposes that their history and archaeology be studied, which would inform the "Cotton, Silk and Sam" industrial heritage trail.

The mills themselves provide for general industrial employment though their upkeep is a problem. In the longer term, the management plan seeks higher value uses to ensure their proper conservation and the enhancement of this part of the conservation area.

North of the cotton mills, there is a line of historic industrial workshops and small factories which need further research to assess their archaeological significance. Some go back to the beginning of Middleton's development as a town. The most important of these is Pioneer Mill at the junction of Lodge Street and Boarshaw



Road. Some of these buildings are in poor condition, others have been mutilated, partially demolished or altered in some way. The management plan seeks to stem this visual and environmental decline. It seeks to make the most of the surviving heritage and encourage new development to replace poor structures of no historic interest through the careful management of future development.

A case in point concerns the unfortunate demolition of, Morton Street Chapel in 2003, then architectural highlight of the area but not included in the then conservation area. Set above the "twenty-four steps" from Boarshaw Road to Moreton Street, a painting by L. S. Lowry's made the scene famous for art lovers and visitors. However, the scene now looks onto an ugly interior wall. There is an aspiration to reinstate the facade of the old chapel (which was very simply designed) thus repairing the damaged townscape. Such reinstatements can be very successful but this is a long term aspiration of the management plan to guide any future development proposal. The "twenty-four steps" have been identified as needing future repair work.

The THI does not cover this character area. The plan thus prioritises firm and careful management of development through which much can be achieved. This also means the likely statutory enforcement of unauthorised development, run down buildings and visual eyesores. The Council will provide a free design advice service for owners considering new developments.

<b>Cotton Mills and Workshops Draft Management Proposals</b>		
Management Scheme	Proposed Agency	Proposed Timescale
Archaeological studies of Lodge, Brookside and Pioneer Mills	Rochdale MBC/THI	Within 1 year
Reinstatement of the lost facade of the "Lowry Chapel".	Developer/Rochdale MBC	No timescale
Maintenance of the "twenty-four steps"	Rochdale MBC	Within 5 years
Development management & enforcement	Rochdale MBC	Continuous
Free design advice and guidance	Rochdale MBC	ontinuous



Simple modern design can be seen in this pair of twentieth century terraced houses on Durnford Street

## Terraced Streets

### **Durnford Street, Grey Street, Sadler Street, Rectory Street and Milton Street**

Middleton, north of Market Place, was largely countryside until relatively recent times and there are few areas of typical Lancashire terraced houses. The Durnford Street area is one worthy of conservation, having a unified regular townscape and simple attractive terraces. Close examination shows them to be Edwardian in date and the last terraced houses before the move to semi-detached types just before the Great War.

The townscape is generally in good condition and the aim of the plan is to manage change and development in such a way that the area's character is retained. In particular, it is proposed to introduce an Article 4 direction on those houses or terraces deemed to be of local historic interest, approximately 10% of buildings in the character area. This would remove certain "permitted development rights" to those affected, requiring that minor developments such as replacement doors,

windows and front walls be done to a conservation standard. It is not considered appropriate for a blanket application of an Article 4 Direction, however.

Edgar Wood's listed Durnford Street Infant School is currently vacant and a new use as a Heritage Skills Training Centre is proposed by the THI. This would train contractors and owners in the skills needed to conserve historic buildings.

Milton Street Family Centre, originally the Edgar Wood designed Independent Labour Party club house, is in need of careful repair and a scheme is proposed in the plan.

Off-street car parking is in short supply and the plan envisages the car park off Lever Street to continue to service the Council Sadler Street Offices and Long Street Church and School, in its new role as the Edgar Wood Heritage Centre.

<b>Terraced Streets Draft Management Proposals</b>		
Management Scheme	Proposed Agency	Proposed Timescale
Article 4 Direction on houses of local historical or architectural interest	Rochdale MBC	Within 2 years
Vacant Durnford Street Infant School to be used as a Heritage Skills Training Centre	Rochdale MBC/THI/Heritage Trust for the North West	Within 1 year
Milton Street Family Centre repair scheme	Rochdale MBC	Within 1 year
Off street car parking at Lever Street for Council Sadler Street Offices and Edgar Wood Heritage Centre.	Rochdale MBC	Ongoing



Silk weavers cottages on the eastern side of Rochdale Road

## Cottages, Silk Mills & Middle Class Houses

### Rochdale Road, Spring Gardens, Union Street and Towncroft Avenue

This character area comprises the northern part of the conservation area. It has two distinct characters that face one another across Rochdale Road. The reason is that the western side of Rochdale road was Church glebe land and was not released for development until the twentieth century. The land on the eastern side, however, was owned by the lord of the manor and released a century earlier.

On the eastern side there are Georgian houses, cottages and two silk mills, Spring Gardens Mill and Rose Mill. The mills are a counterpoint to the cotton mills on Lodge Street and similarly need archaeological research to fully understand their significance. They are complemented by silk weavers cottages, some in good condition and others struggling in their current use as shops. It is anticipated that some will change their use back to residential and the plan proposes that this is done carefully to retain and enhance the historic character of these humble buildings. These buildings will form part of the proposed "Cotton, Silk and Sam" industrial heritage trail.



The western side is quite different being made up of middle-class semi-detached houses of late nineteenth century and early-mid twentieth century date. Of exceptional importance is a group of five Edgar Wood house designs built either side of Rochdale Road between Spring Gardens and Towncroft Avenue. Here, one can trace the development of Wood's architecture from a late Victorian Aesthetic Movement styling to a radical Modernism that prophesied the great changes of the twentieth century. These buildings are highlighted in the THI for special conservation treatment. The pavement to the houses on the western side of Rochdale Road is narrow and a scheme to increase the space and comfort of pedestrians is proposed. Once restored, these houses will act as a striking gateway to Middleton town centre and have national and possibly international significance.

With some exceptions, the residential buildings are generally in good condition and the aim is to manage change and development in such a way that the area's character is retained. It is proposed to introduce an Article 4 direction on those houses or terraces deemed to be of local historic interest, approximately 10% of buildings in the character area. This would remove certain "permitted development rights" to those houses affected and require that minor developments, such as replacement doors, windows and front walls be done to a conservation standard. It is not considered appropriate for a blanket application of an Article 4 Direction, however.

The plan prioritises the firm and careful management of development through which much can be achieved. This also means the likely statutory enforcement of unauthorised development, run down buildings and visual eyesores. The Council will provide a free design advice service for owners considering new developments. Spring Gardens Mill is suffering from lack of maintenance and requires a scheme of sensitive repair and enhancement, something identified in the THI proposals.

<b>Cottages, Silk Mills &amp; Middle Class Houses Draft Management Proposals</b>		
<i>Management Scheme</i>	<i>Proposed Agency</i>	<i>Proposed Timescale</i>
Article 4 Direction on houses of local historical or architectural interest	Rochdale MBC	Within 2 years
Conserve and restore the special group of Edgar Wood houses	THI	Within 5 years
Pedestrian Improvements to Rochdale Road at the Edgar Wood houses	Rochdale MBC	Within 10 years
Archaeological studies on Spring Gardens Mill and Rose Mill	Rochdale MBC	Within 1 year
Development management & enforcement	Rochdale MBC	Continuous
Free design advice and guidance	Rochdale MBC	Continuous



Middle class houses on the western side of Rochdale Road. This pair were designed by Edgar Wood



Rose Silk Mill, Spring Gardens