

Edgar Wood and Middleton Townscape Heritage Initiative
51-53 Rochdale Road, Middleton - Advice on Restoration



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Preface

The Edgar Wood & Middleton Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a Heritage Lottery Fund partnership scheme. Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust is a lead partner represented on the THI Board. It provides two days per week professional conservation support. Its role includes:

- delivering a conservation project for Long Street Methodist School and a complementary project for Long Street Methodist Church;
- providing office space for the THI in the School;
- providing specialist restoration advice and historical material on Edgar Wood Buildings; and,
- drawing up and contributing to complementary initiatives of the THI.

This document relates to the third role with regard to 51-53 Rochdale Road. Both houses are in an excellent state of external preservation. The survival of the interior of No. 53 is also good while the interior of no. 51 Rochdale Road has not been inspected by the writer. Nevertheless, the Edgar Wood & Middleton THI is only concerned with repair and restoration of the exterior. Proposed repairs will be drawn up by the consultant surveyor or architect and this document aims to complement these with an appreciation of the building and guidance on the restoration of its historic patina and features.



Summary of Significance

Numbers 51 and 53 Rochdale Road are significant for a number of reasons.

- They comprise an excellently preserved example of Arts and Crafts domestic architecture.
- They have intrinsic value as a pair of artistically designed houses, where a picturesque quality is obtained through sensitive use of materials rather than irregular form.
- The efficient creation of asymmetry within a rigid symmetrical façade is notable and would inform Wood's later designs, for example 36 Mellalieu Street nearby.
- The building is an early example of the shift in architectural expression from irregular form to one where materials and formality play the dominant role.
- The building is possibly the first polite architect-designed house to use common bricks to define the front elevation, something which, again, looked towards the future.

Restoration Advice



Approach to Restoration

51-53 Rochdale Road are in an excellent state of preservation as can be seen in the above modern and historic photographs. The old photograph of the front is a postcard with May 25th 1908 hand written on the back. The extent of soot accumulation on the building and the amount of plant growth suggest it was taken several years after the pair were built in 1899. A date of around 1906 to 1908 would be about right.

This photograph and the slightly later one of the side are our only reference photographs to the early days of the building. Close observation has clarified a number of detailed matters which are addressed below.

One immediately notices how the older photograph shows a more dynamic building than the modern picture.

This is because the large hedge of No. 51 now obscures the lower part of the tall bay window which is responsible for most of the upward movement in the design. The hedge also runs across and hides the stone end post marking the extent of the front garden. Thus, it can be seen that the garden and its planting has a considerable impact on the appearance of the building and this will be considered in later.

The photographs also show that the front is the principal architectural element requiring restoration. Though visible, the gable wall and side elevations to No. 51 are much quieter after the first chimney stack. The irregular fenestration is nevertheless carefully arranged to present itself attractively to Towncroft Avenue. However, the scene is let down by the modern garage gates (now replaced) and the tall fencing behind, illustrating again the importance of the garden in the presentation of the building.



Impact of Repair

Two repair issues impact on the historic appearance and patina and are therefore a restoration concern.

- cement re-pointing presently covers the whole of the building
- treatment of leaded light windows

Cement Re-pointing

The extent of re-pointing in lime-based mortars needs careful consideration by the consultant architect. A judgement needs to be made whether wholesale repointing of the front elevation (i.e. as far as the chimney stacks) is necessary and whether this ought to be extended across the side and rear elevations also. This would be based on the degree of deterioration attributable to the modern cement mortar and the likelihood of future deterioration. Close inspection of the front elevation shows surface deterioration to both bricks and stonework. The different bricks on the side elevations seem to be more robust. The erosion of the underside of the stone canopy (above) is most likely related to water ingress due to faulty waterproofing.

Small areas of patch pointing would be best done in a coloured lime mortar that fits well with the existing mortar. However, if comprehensive repointing is decided upon, the following advice should be considered.

Mortar analysis samples should be taken from the front and sides of the building (assuming the side is to be repointed). On two nearby buildings, ILP Clubhouse and 36 Mellalieu Street, mortar analysis by the Scottish Lime Centre showed that Wood used hot-lime mortars for pointing the front elevations and on 36 Mellalieu Street standard black ash mortar pointing was used on the side elevation. The colour of the hot-lime mortar was a light cream/buff, in contrast to the grey of the black ash mortar. It therefore seems that the mortar colour was a component of the 'paint it white' approach discussed in the following two sections.

It is noticeable that the mortar on the old photograph and others in Appendix 1, is dark. Mortar analysis would determine whether or not this is simply soot accumulation in the initial years following construction, as it was found to be at 36 Mellalieu Street. (Nb. pointing is coarse so soot accumulates on it very quickly).

A high level of technique will be needed to prevent physical damage or smearing to the brickwork. Hot-lime mortars are within the expertise of just a few contractors and, having previously been let down with regard to 36 Mellalieu Street, such work is best (sub)contracted only to those who can prove their expertise.

Leaded Lights – 'Paint It White'

The leaded lights had a key role in the aesthetics of Wood's buildings. Wood favoured them for providing diffused light to interiors and for privacy, reducing the need for net curtains. They also had an aesthetic purpose, to maintain the sense of texture across the glazed areas, preventing the visual disruption caused by single large pieces of glass. The unleaded lower ground floor window panes facing Rochdale Road are occasionally seen on other Wood designs and were a concession to those clients who wanted a good view outside. These should be left unleaded to preserve an historical design compromise.

Where costs restrict the installation of true leaded lights, the economical alternative of applied leading is much preferable to none at all, as it still achieves Wood's intentions of breaking up the surface of the glass, though to a lesser degree.

An important detail is that Wood painted the lead comes white, as can be seen in the early photograph of the front and side elevations and other examples in Appendix 1. It was part of Wood's 'paint it white' approach to all timber and lead work (see below). Aesthetically, the whitened lead comes make an important difference, as can be seen in the before and after photographs of Old Clergy House, Almondbury, West Yorkshire (built 1898). Here the white paint on the lead comes was not reinstated after the leaded lights were repaired between 2005 and 2007. The result is that the windows 'drop out', receding from the surface plane of the wall. The architectural form is consequently less clear.

Effect of Painting Lead Comes White



Old Clergy House, Almondbury, West Yorkshire 2005 with white painted comes



Old Clergy House, Almondbury, West Yorkshire 2007 with unpainted comes



White painted comes at
51-53 Rochdale Road

Restoring Lost Features

The exterior remains largely as Wood designed it. There have been only minor changes to the house with more substantial alterations to the gardens and their perimeter walls.

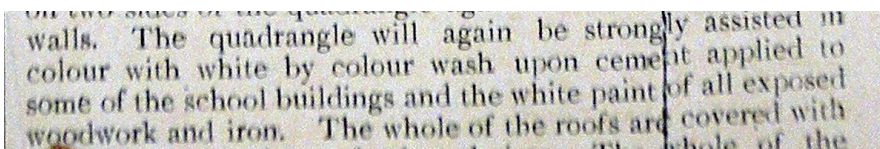
With such a well preserved building, it is important to establish which lost elements have sufficient significance to be restored and which are a positive or neutral records of change. Wood envisaged his buildings changing to some degree over time and he implied this in his drawings which showed picturesque decay and ad hoc alterations. The alterations are considered in three groups relating to the external building, front gardens and side garden of No. 51.

External Changes to the Building



The entrance doors are painted yellow

The historic photo shows the doors as very dark in colour, possibly black, but perhaps red.. The yellow colour we have today is therefore a subsequent alteration and was also used on a modern timber front gate (now removed). The yellow painted doors are certainly not what Wood intended.



Wood always specified white for window and door joinery, downpipes and fencing as with Wood's description of Long Street School buildings built the same year as 51-53 Rochdale Road. Contemporary photographs also bear this out, see Greystoke, Hale opposite and a selection of house design in Appendix 1. Old photographs also suggest that Wood painted some timber, particularly fencing, in lime-wash with its characteristic fading when it washes off, thus emulating the vernacular tradition and time worn surfaces.

Very occasionally, doors are not white in early photographs and there may have been occasional exceptions to the rule. In addition water down pipes are occasionally dark so, overall, there is not quite 100% certainty. It is worth being cautious and commissioning paint analysis for the two front doors of Nos. 51-53 (though of little help if the paint has been burnt off in the past and there is no continuous paint strata).

If the matter remains uncertain, the fall-back position should be to paint the doors white, i.e. off white.



It is worth noting that white was a symbol of the avant garde movement and many second owners of Wood homes rapidly removed such representations. They also removed the applied colours Wood used on internal timber work and his plain modern marble fireplaces. Charles Jackson had left No. 53 by 1905, most likely before the old photograph of Nos. 51-53 was taken. A photograph of his new house, Studio House (or The Studio), later Arkholme shows it had a white door. It is therefore likely that the dark doors in the old photograph are not original.

White (i.e. off white) painted doors at Nos. 51-53 should look quite striking, see opposite.



EDGAR WOOD-MANCHESTER
Woods eigenes Haus in Middleton

A contemporary photo of Wood's own house (lhs above) is useful because it removes the possible involvement of any client with regard to the colour scheme. White is used on the downpipes, barge board, windows and lead work. The stone window mullions, the rendered rhs bay, fencing and gateways seem to show varying degrees of washed off limewash. In this manner, the perimeter and many of the masonry surfaces of Wood's houses were highly rustic.

Colour of window frames and dormers

Window frames were almost always painted white and the slim metal frames in the old photograph of 51-53 Rochdale Road confirm to this.

The timber frames of the dormer windows are toned mid-grey and by cross referencing with contemporary pictures of other buildings, this most likely suggests a limewash or similar paint that had partly washed off. Thus the dormer window frame, as well as the lead comes, should be painted an off white.

The timber boarding above the dormer window frame is very dark in the old photo, something consistent with the colour black found on other Wood buildings. This matches the (not local) vernacular use of the material. Thus black is the correct colour to paint the boarding.



A downpipe has been placed to the left of the doors

This was added sometime in the past and is instead of the rainwater running to the rhs downpipe on No. 53. The added downpipe runs into a pre-existing g.f. pipe which drains the door canopy. Removing this downpipe and straightening the gutter run to the original downpipe (on the rhs) would be good for the aesthetics of the front elevation (if technically possible).

The sum of these minor changes can be seen below with the proviso that the lead comes would also be painted white.

Before

After



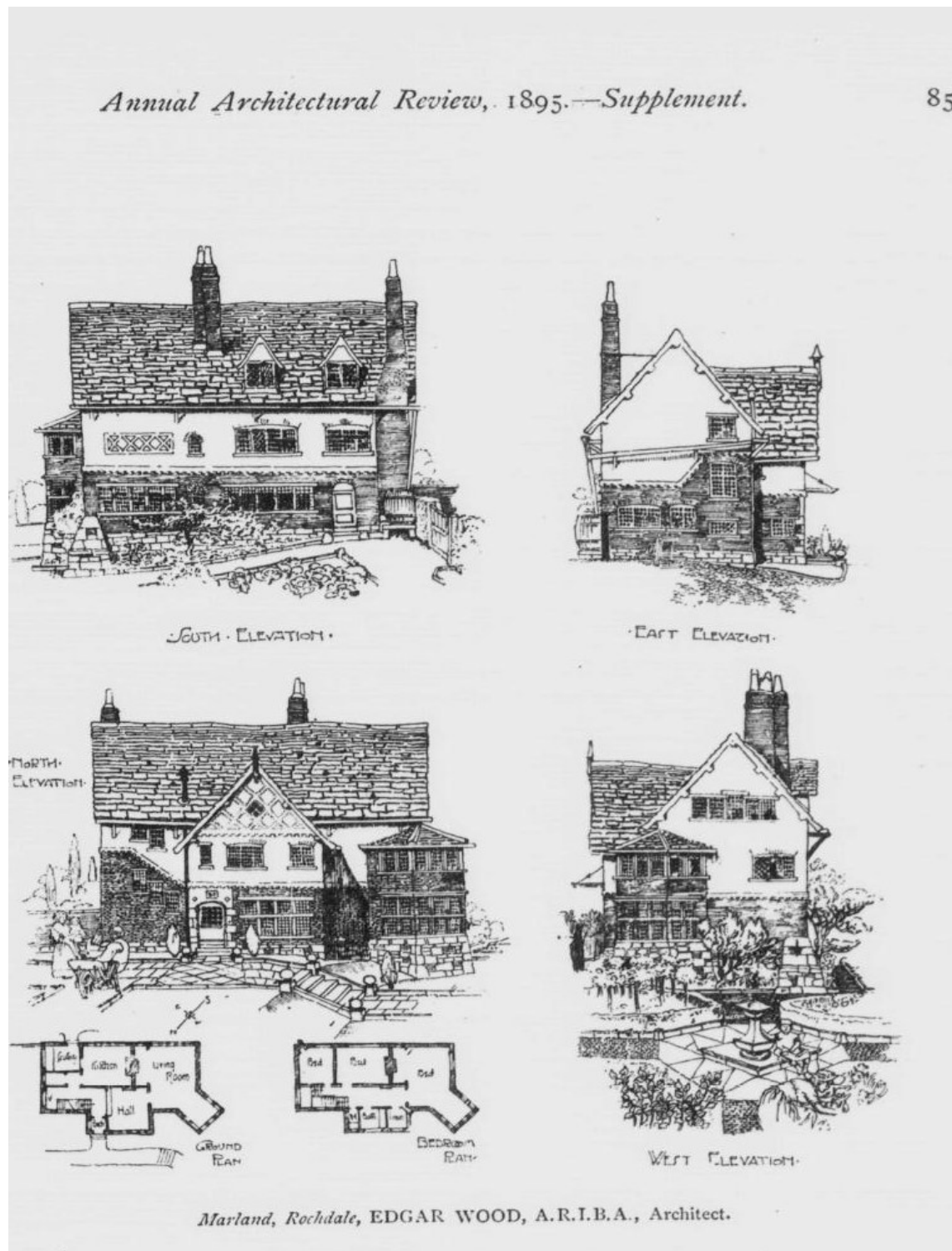
A diagonal pipe takes water from the right-hand bay around the quoins

The present diagonal pipe visually disrupts the quoins as it wraps around the corner. The original arrangement of a vertical pipe on the front elevation should be restored.

Black tar has been applied to the roof slates of No. 51

The removal of the tar may be impossible. However, it is not sufficiently damaging to the aesthetics of the building that it warrants the replacement of the old slates for new. This is because the tarred slates fit reasonably well into Wood's aesthetic vision of evolving picturesque change, see his drawing for a house at Marland below. It is, after all, an old rural method of repair (though not a good one). Provided the slates are usable, it would be best to continue using them thereby retaining authenticity and reference to the passing of time.

Wood specified his materials very carefully for their aesthetic contribution and it may be impossible to obtain exactly matching stone slates. Careful recycling and the hiding of any new material to the rear is thus essential.



Changes to the Front Gardens on Rochdale Road

- The loss of the front garden railings and gates for the WWII war effort.
- The erection of a party railing and its subsequent removal for the war effort.
- The rebuilding of the front garden wall to No. 53 at a slightly higher level following the removal of the railings.
- The growth of the hedge to No. 51 to a substantial height following the removal of the railings.

The original railings, while an attractive feature, were probably not a very significant part of the design. Railings did not chime with Wood's design prior to 1906 which was based on rural features. Consequently, they are rare and, where they do appear, one sometimes finds white fencing initially specified in the drawings. The handful of instances of railings are probably concessions to mainstream thinking of his clients.



The old photograph shows that there were no original party wall railings, despite the remains in the coping stones. This confirms an initial suspicion as the remains show that these railings did not connect to the surviving fragment located between the two gateposts. Consequently, there is no case to restore the party wall railings.

However, one can detect in the photo a low horizontal metal rail running parallel with the coping stone but, unfortunately it is not possible to interpret this with confidence. The most likely situation is that an original single horizontal rail was replaced with taller railings, which were then later removed.

The removal of both the original and later railings and gates was almost certainly due to World War II, a world event which affected millions of people. Consequently, there is a conservation case for not reinstating the original railings either.

Restoration Option 1 – Least Intervention

This option would retain the boundary walls as they are. It has the advantages of preserving historic change, the least alteration to the existing planting (which assists with privacy) and is the cheapest option. The existing planting is overgrown and hides the front of the houses to an unacceptable degree. A particular problem is that the two hedges of No. 51 to the front and side gardens have coalesced into one large long hedge that undermines the proportions of the house. Nb. on the last visit, the shrubs to No. 53 were considerably larger than in these photographs. The following works should be undertaken.



1. No. 51 – Reduce the hedge to the front garden (not the side garden) to just above the level of the gatepost and trim back to expose the hidden stone post on the lhs. This will clarify the extent of the front garden, break up the long hedge and expose more of the tall bay window, essential to the design of the pair.
2. Privacy can be maintained by keeping the hedge of the side garden at the present height so the front of the house is hidden to those walking uphill, till the last moment.

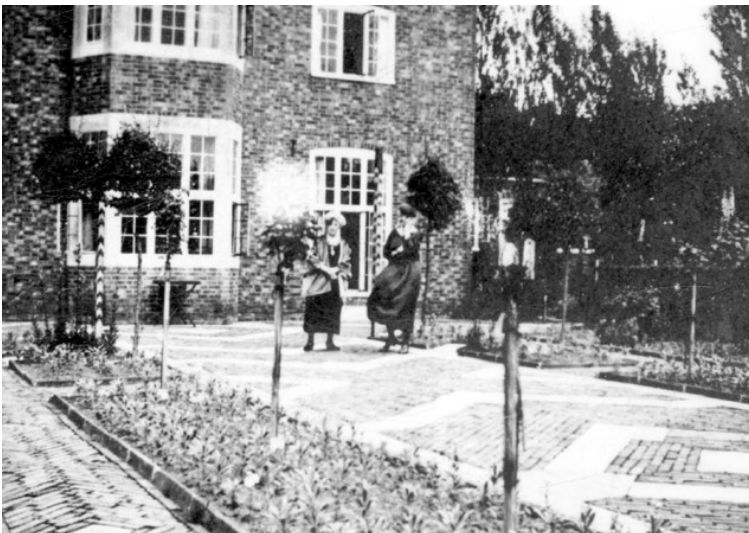


3. No. 53 – Remove the large yellow/green cypress and trim back the other shrubs. The bright yellow shrub near the gate should also be removed as it would draw the eye away from the neutrality of the white doors and gates.
4. If so desired, install a pair of rustic timber gates like the ones recently removed but painted off white. The gates should be a little more elegant than the example in the photograph. Timber gates would fit the present shrub planting better than the iron gates that were originally installed.
5. Nb. reinstating the original iron gates would not be a good conservation approach as it would confuse the picture with regard to the impact of WW2 (making it look like the railings were removed but not the gates). The iron gates would also look wrong surrounded by such heavy planting and without the matching railings.

Restoration Option 2 – Most Intervention

Restoring the railings logically leads to the wholesale restoration of the two front gardens, including new planting in the gardens. For example, to practically install the railings and then allow them their original role, the existing hedge and shrubs will need to be removed. There is no purpose having both a hedge/shrubs and railings, the former will always engulf the latter so they disappear. The small privet hedge in the old photograph was already making the railings disappear.

If there is a vision on behalf of the architect, clients and THI officers for such an approach, then such a restoration could be successful. Using the old photograph for details of the railings, walls etc., it would be possible to accurately restore of the original front garden perimeter. However, one wonders whether it would be worth the effort and consequential loss of privacy. Also, would future owners simply regrow large hedges because the houses are so close to the busy main road and associated night time activity? Option 1 may be the better way to go in the long term because the current situation has evolved to accommodate these issues.



The original railings ran from the central gates to the two stone columns, which line up to the corners of the building. Restoring the railings would mean the rebuilding of the current wall to No.53 as it is presently too high. Edgar Wood encouraged a formal style of planting which involved clipping shrubs into tall lollipops (to give a sense of enclosure to space) combined with low-lying flowering plants. See the photo of his Middleton home (above) and his later Hale home (opposite).

The creation of formal front gardens in this manner could be an exciting way of giving these houses a completely new look.

Changes to Side Garden of No. 51

New garden wall and loss of fencing to Rochdale Road

Immediately south of the front garden on Rochdale Road is the side garden to No. 51, something not originally anticipated when the building was designed (see later). The old photograph shows that it was originally bounded by a diamond header brick retaining wall, like that on Towncroft Avenue, topped by a mortared in line of brick headers as a coping. A small rural style fence with alternating pointed and round topped pickets was immediately behind and a small privet hedge planted behind this. The hedge is now approaching two metres high and the wall and fence have been replaced with a standard wall, the same height and type as the front garden.

There seems little point to any reinstatement here because the hedge is a fine feature providing much needed privacy. There is a lack of significance of the original arrangement, which was unexpected. The most interesting feature is the diamond headed wall which largely survives on Towncroft Avenue.



Loss of original fencing and alterations to the wall on Towncroft Avenue

On Towncroft Avenue, the situation is similar but there is some scope to restore the historical character by replacing the panelled fencing with close-boarded picket fencing with alternating round and pointed tops, of a similar height.

The new fencing should be painted off white. Similar fencing can be seen (in a poor condition) in the old 1930s photograph of Towncroft Avenue.



Garage entrance on Towncroft Avenue

The poor garage gates shown in the earlier photographs have been replaced by a new gate in an orange stain. The simplest option here is to paint this work off white.

While a more historical gate design might be possible, the location is furthest from the areas of most significance and, if the work is of a good quality, it should be retained.



Context and Significance of Edgar Wood and 51-53 Rochdale Road

Wood's Architectural Practice

Edgar Wood was summed up in a 1904 German publication, *Das englische Haus*, as 'one of the best representatives of those who go their own way and refuse to reproduce earlier styles'.

Today, Wood is considered the most experimental of the Arts and Crafts architects. Although an individualist in style and expression, he nevertheless had a commitment to collaborative working with like-minded designers. Thus his architectural development finds parallels in the work of Charles Voysey, Edwin Lutyens, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Josef Hoffman amongst others.

Wood was able to build in such an individual way because he ran an unusual semi-commercial practice which expressed architecture as an art form. His practice was never large like that of, say, Lutyens. His bespoke designs were mainly for friends and family, who were naturally more sympathetic than the average commercial client. Most were small buildings, representing the middling wealth of his manufacturing class. They allowed him to incrementally develop ideas from commission to commission.

His legacy of forty to fifty buildings in and around the Middleton area (plus two small clusters in Huddersfield and Hale, Cheshire) charts this linear development of form, materials and decoration. Some designs mark important shifts in his architectural evolution and that of the Arts and Crafts movement generally. Their importance to developing ideas can be greater than their physical size or relative fame. 51-53 Rochdale Road is one of these.

By the late 1890s, Wood was known in Britain, USA and the German countries as a leading avant garde designer of the Arts and Crafts school. He was embarking on the construction of his first masterpiece Long Street Methodist Church and School. That design was some seven years old, though updated to keep pace with his stylistic development. The much smaller 51-53 Rochdale Road, also built in 1899, is a truer statement Wood's artistic position at that time.

Wood's Method of Working

By abandoning previous architectural styles, which the Victorians had successfully plundered for their finest buildings, Wood had to start from first principles. Though in awe of the great tradition of historical building, he realised that copying it stylistically would add very little to it. He therefore sought to develop tradition without copying its styles. He was the most determined of the Arts and Crafts designers to break free from historicism through the English Freestyle approach. He concentrated on functionality, the character of local materials and, after 1905, replaced the picturesque with a formal cubic style where an overall symmetry was enlivened by slight asymmetry. His individual forms and motifs remained traditional but they were modified or combined in a manner that removed their original context and meaning. In Wood's own words in his presidential speech to Manchester Society of Architects in 1911...

The successful one will have sufficient original force to embody and not be embodied and when the mind that gathers proves to be stronger we do not grudge him the right to help himself from where he will. We welcome the strength because all belongs to him. And should anyone discover the process of changing metals and present us with gold from his scrap heap we should be more than human if we insisted too strongly from whence he had snatched his material.

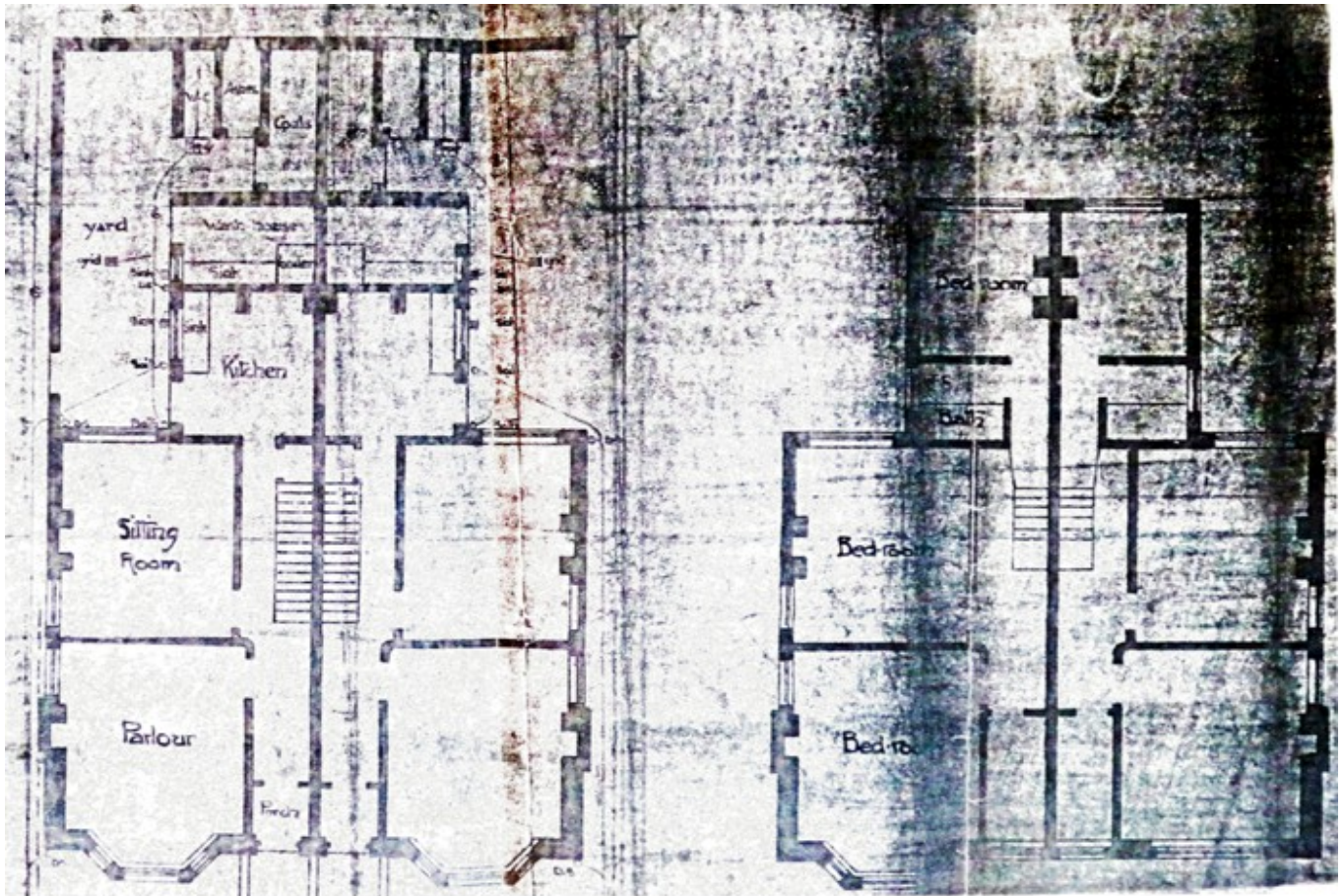
In this manner Wood heavily influenced the character of twentieth century English modernism as an eclectic mix of radical and traditional which emphasised the practical and contextual.

Working from Plan

Wood designed from plan upwards, something of a revolution at the time. Thus, he first ensured that the plan worked well and efficiently before elevating the building from the plan, sometimes quite ruthlessly. In the early days he did so with an good eye for the picturesque while after 1900 he became ever more formal.

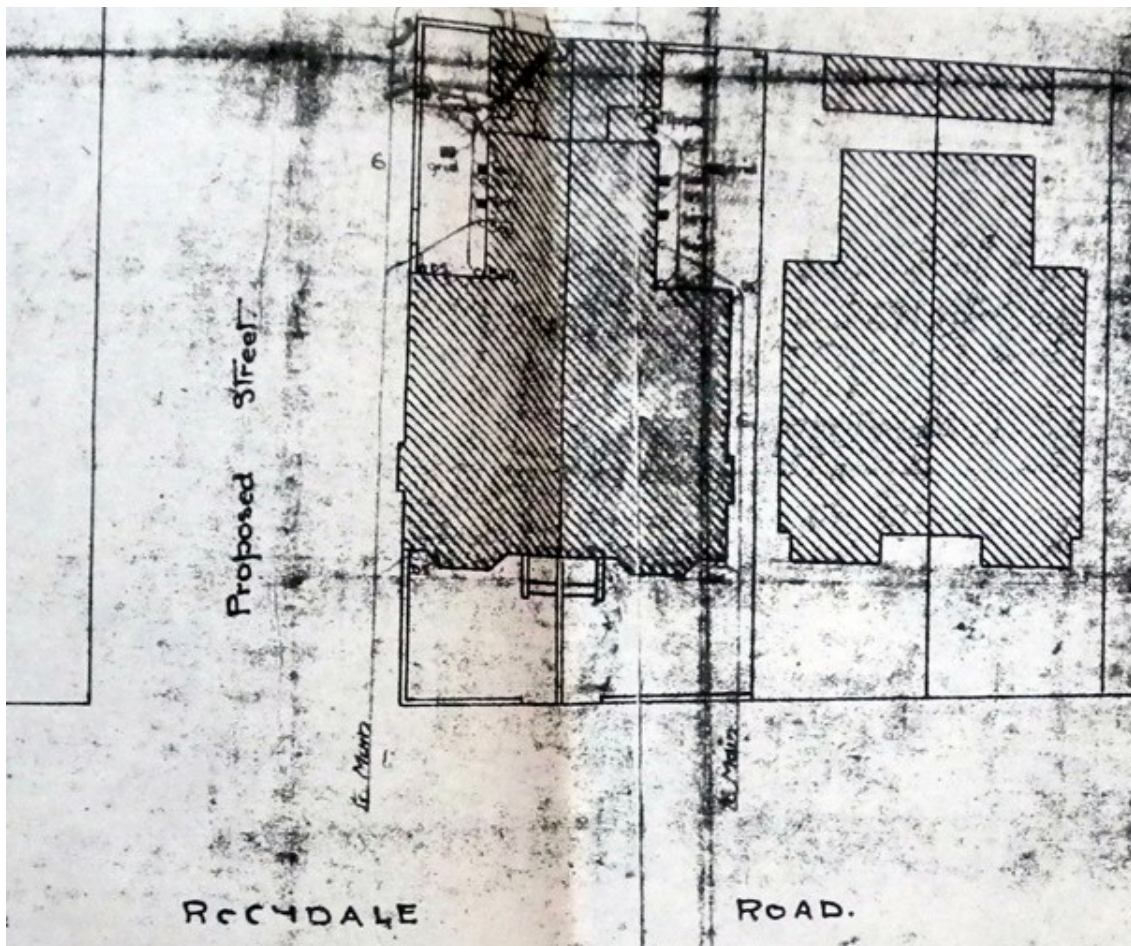
Wood preferred efficient centralised planning in his detached houses. He was also happy using mainstream plans and layouts, if these could not be bettered. By contrast, many Arts and Crafts architects favoured the less efficient layouts, such as the back-corridor plan, which meant much time spent walking room to room. Such layouts produced the long low forms and sweeping roofs so beloved of the movement.

51-53 Rochdale Road - Plan

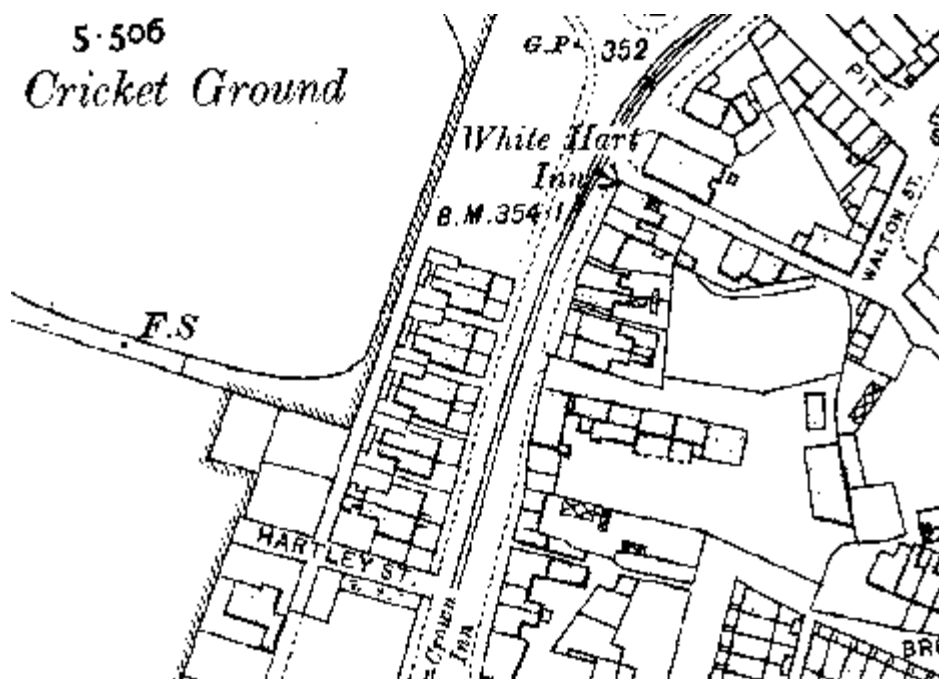


At 51-53 Rochdale Road, the plan is a simple double pile with rear extensions, something almost universal for terraced and semi-detached houses, as can be seen along the street. The plan for each house has a corridor and rear staircase that serve two rooms on each floor and the rear two storey extension.

Wood slightly modified the typical staircase design to create a greater sense of vertical space in the confined stairwell. Encouraging the flow of interior space was generally a moderate element of Wood's interiors. He avoided the overt open planning practised, for example, by Frank Lloyd Wright.



The building was originally planned to sit adjacent a new street off Rochdale Road opening the land to the west. However, the initial short street was first laid out only half width, with the northern half becoming the side garden to No. 51. It was initially called Hartley Street, then Towncroft Avenue, which after 1928 was made full width by widening southwards, meaning No. 51 retained its side garden. Ordnance Survey plans also show that the side garden was divided into three parts plus the front garden.



Form and Style

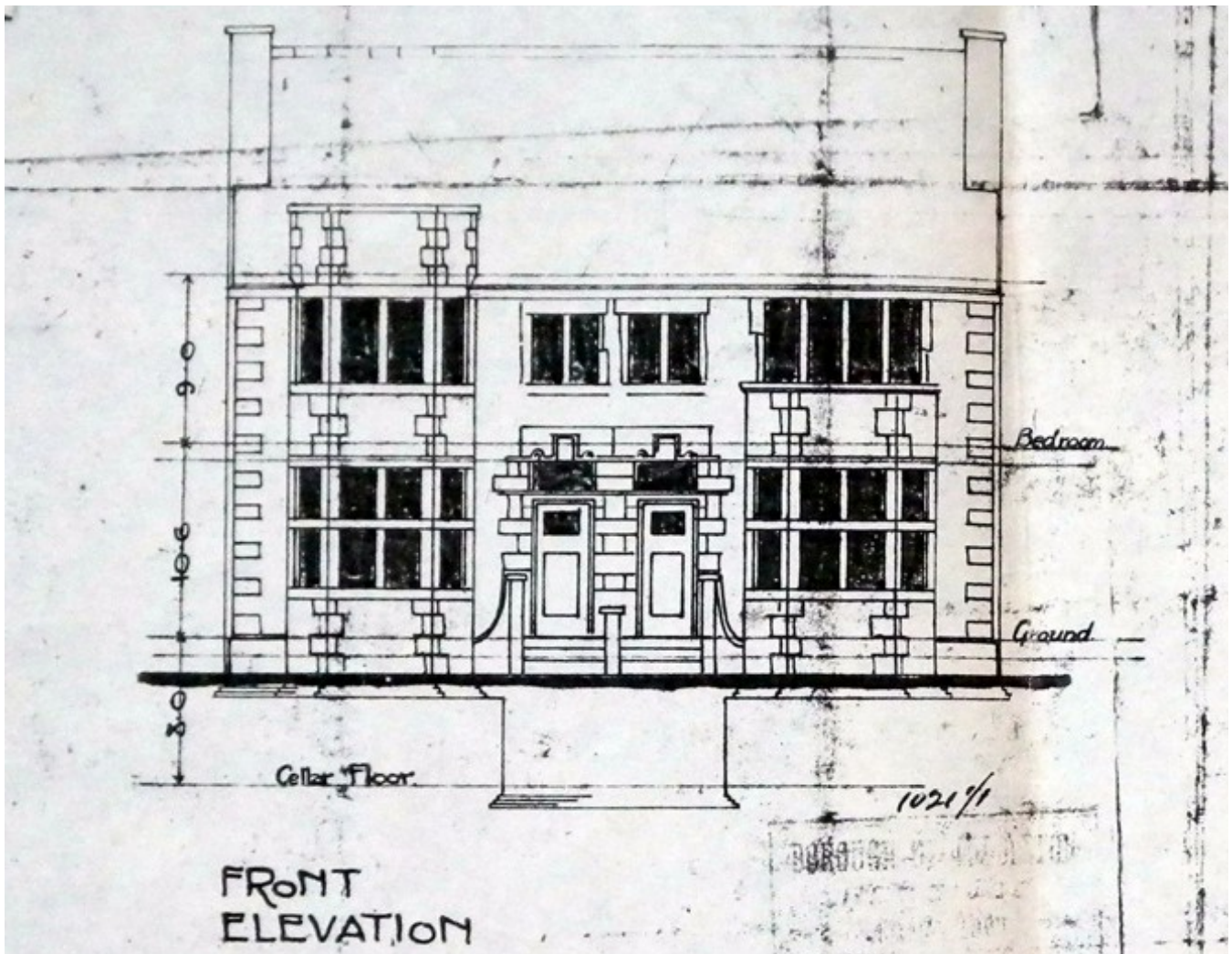
Despite Wood's rejection of the styles used by most of his contemporaries, he could not avoid elements of style absolutely. Nevertheless, where he used particular stylisms, he broke the rules by combining them in new and interesting ways. In some buildings he could be quite wilful.

Wood's vernacular forms were not always of local origin, many came from the Midlands. His roof pitches were also steeper than local tradition and his use of dormers is foreign to the Lancashire vernacular.

51-53 Rochdale Road - Form and Style

51-53 Rochdale Road mark a departure where historic stylistic devices are virtually absent and the appearance is dominated by the building materials and the effects they create. There is a slight exception in the crossed transoms, which have a Jacobean reference (originally to infer a higher social status), and the mullioned windows which are like those on early Georgian weavers houses. Nevertheless, their use is not historicist as the mullioned windows are larger than their historic precedents and their stonework more slender and simpler.

Their purpose was principally aesthetic. The crossed transoms along with the doorways first draw the eye to the ground floor. Their absence on the floor above means the eye quickly ascends following the line of the first floor mullions to the dormers. This creates an upward sweep in the design that counters the building's simple box-like mass. It is also enhanced by the slightly raised roadside location and the pointed gateposts to the garden walls. The upward movement of the left hand bay is particularly emphasised as it breaks through the eaves of the roof to almost touch the dormer. It should be noted that the dormers are not on the original elevation and the added floor absent from the plans and cross section. Wood's drawings were always left undated and often added to as the design matures.



The façade's asymmetry is actually derived from the underlying grid-like symmetry. It is created by the simple extension of the ground floor left hand bay upwards through the eaves of the roof, possibly in recognition of its corner location to the road junction. The resulting change in balance is countered by the ornamented paired doors with their large single horizontal canopy which pulls the design back to the centre. It is a wonderfully balanced and sophisticated design.

Materials and Decoration

Wood used an Arts and Crafts approach to materials which focused on the hands-on tradition of construction (brick, stone, timber etc.) rather than style. The way in which these materials were used in vernacular design (without reference to the great style systems) Wood emulated. He used a palate of commonly available local materials and applied them in an artistic, almost painterly manner. However, he did not go to the lengths of E. S. Prior, for example, who actually excavated a unique set of materials from the immediate locality. Occasionally, Wood imported non-local materials when associated with a particular non-local vernacular form, such as the horizontal black timber weatherboarding he used on on dormers and lightweight extensions. Wood used heavy local roofing flagstones after 1894 which gave his buildings a very robust feel.

51-53 Rochdale Road - Materials and Decoration

Wood enhanced the design of 51-53 Rochdale Road by providing two timber-clad dormers above the bays which give an upward lift to the otherwise square heavy looking building. The barge boards on the dormers are plain and can appear like arrows pointing upwards, an Art Nouveau motif that Wood often used.



The paired doorways appear original in style (see contents page). Above them are 'Yorkshire Lintels', a Jacobean vernacular feature found in North Yorkshire (see opposite). They comply with Wood's preference for decorative 'accents' which draw the eye and focus the composition in otherwise plain buildings.

The door panelling and the engraved underside of the canopies are derived from the triangular motifs of seventeenth century furniture and woodwork (below opposite). Wood had used them before but in this instance he detaches them sufficiently from their original context, that they appear quite new. Their appearance anticipates Art Deco of which Wood is an acknowledged pioneer. In the context of Wood's other designs and what was happening elsewhere, a reasonable claim could be made that these doors are the first examples of Art Deco styling in the world.



The masonry colours are muted. For the first time in an Edgar Wood middle-class house, common bricks were used on the front façade, something understandably resisted by clients of the time. Cross referencing suggests it may be the first time anywhere. The bricks have been carefully sorted for their white patches, which combine with other white elements so that white becomes a dominant element of the colour scheme. Other, similar examples can be found in Appendix 1. This treatment wraps around as far as the chimneys after which they are plain, thus almost reversing the traditional hierarchy. The variations in the muted bricks, the long and short stone quoins to both the corners and the bays, the traditional timber boarding in the dormers and leaded light windows combine to create an all-over surface texture of considerable picturesque beauty. The overall effect is rich and attractive and extends to the garden wall on Towncroft Avenue which is made of unmortared diamond header bricks.

The Original Clients

The sympathetic clients behind the building were John Thorpe (who signed the plans), of the silk manufacturers John and Isaac Thorpe whose Spring Gardens Mill mill lay opposite Wood's house, Redcroft a little further down Rochdale Road. The other client was Wood's close friend Charles Jackson, photographer and Manchester art dealer. Charles Jackson also commissioned the nearby photographic studio, 1 Towncroft Avenue (aka Arkholme) in 1901 and converted it to his house in 1905. It was Jackson who introduced Wood to his future partner J. Henry Sellers in 1903/4. The 1901 census records Harry(?) Thorpe (unclear handwriting which doesn't look like John) as head of the household of No. 51 with his father Isaac Thorpe also living there and Charles Jackson and family at No. 53.

Published References on 51-53 Rochdale Road

The architectural historian and principal author on Edgar Wood, John Archer, refers to the balance of symmetry and asymmetry of the design in *Edgar Wood a Manchester Art Nouveau Architect* (1966) while Buildings of England, *Lancashire: Manchester and the South East* volume makes a similar comment.

There are references to 51-53 Rochdale Road in a more detailed paper published by Manchester University written by this author, *'Here, by Experiment': Edgar Wood in Middleton* (2012). The references are as follows.

Unity of the three pairs of semi-detached houses on Rochdale Road: *On Fencegate, Wood used the Briarhill motif of a two-storey bay rising through the eaves to a dormer, repeating it again on 51–53 Rochdale Road to the north, thereby connecting the three quite differently styled buildings.*

Materials, Design and Context with other Wood buildings: *The same year Wood made the breakthrough on a pair of middle-class houses, 51–53 Rochdale Road (1899, listed Grade II), where he combined common brick and stone textures in an almost painterly way, with leaded lights carrying the delicate character across the windows with minimal interruption. The façade has a simple tripartite symmetry and a grid-like discipline so that the building's picturesque qualities stem largely from the materials. The boxlike form is softened by the use of dormers while a slight asymmetry is introduced in the bay windows. The same approach can be seen in a symmetrically designed solicitor's office at 5 Greaves Street, Oldham (1901, listed Grade II), built in an attractive yellow stone with a striking art nouveau doorway as its centrepiece.*

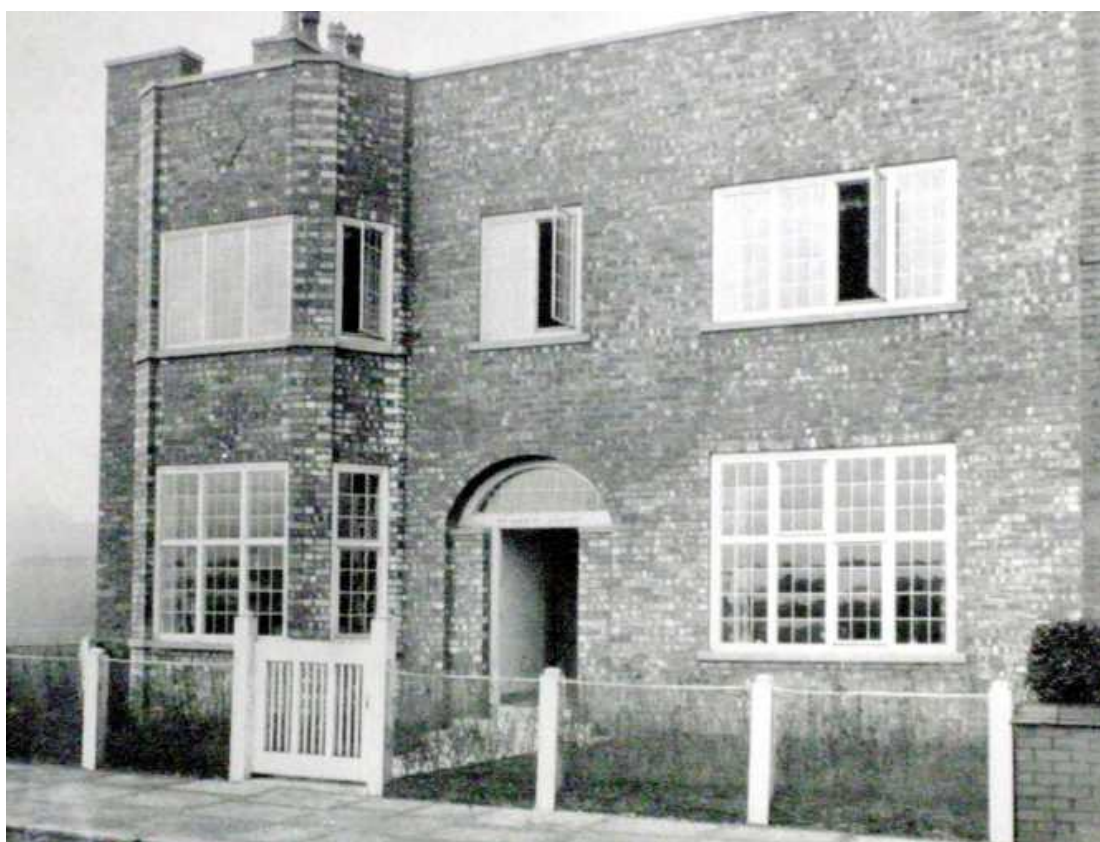
Occupier of 53 Rochdale Road: *53 Rochdale Road was occupied by Wood's friend, Charles Jackson, an art dealer and photographer who shortly afterwards commissioned a photographic studio on an adjacent site.*

Historical Significance: *A remarkable cluster of six houses illustrates in miniature the passing of a most significant moment in European architectural history: Redcroft and Fencegate, Briarhill, 34–48 Rochdale Road, 51–53 Rochdale Road, The Studio and 36 Mellalieu Street vividly demonstrate the emergence of twentieth-century modernism from the break-up of nineteenth-century historicism*

Appendix 1 'Paint It White' - White Paint/Limewash on Timber and Metal

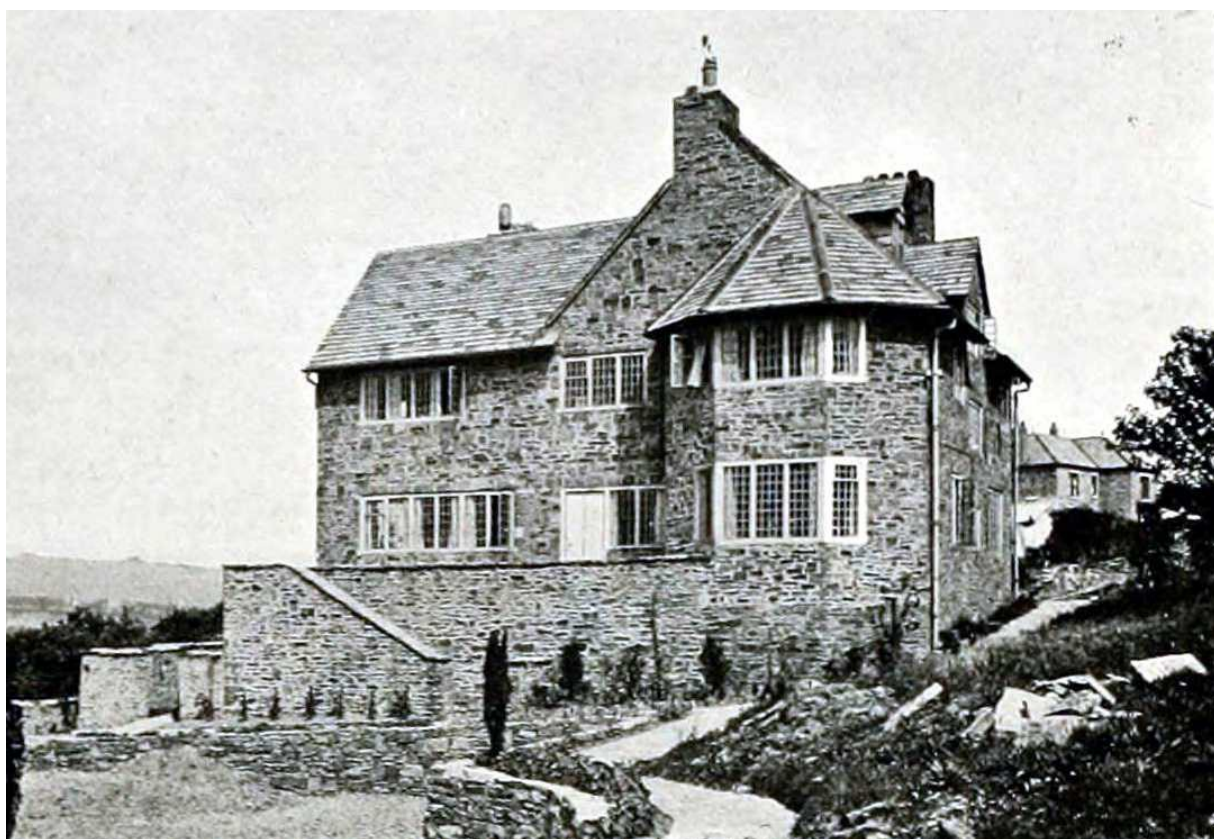


*EDGAR WOOD-MANCHESTER
Haus in Almondbury, Huddersfield*





EDGAR WOOD-MANCHESTER
Prof. Collier's Haus in Bowdon





EDGAR WOOD - MANCHESTER
Haus in Bowdon



HAUS IN EDGERTON BEI HUDDERSFIELD, YORKSHIRE

ARCH : EDGAR WOOD