Planning Department
Bury Council
3 Knowsley Place
Duke Street
Bury
BL9 0EJ

Our Ref: RG/RG/G1141/L001
Date: 29th April 2026

Dear Sir / Madam

PROPOSED ERECTION OF PERGOLA AND ASSOCIATED SENSORY GARDEN AT SIDE OF WOLSTENHOLME HOUSE, 4 TENTERDEN STREET, BURY, BL9 0EG

We are instructed by the Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People to submit this full planning application in respect of the above development.

The aim of this proposal is to enhance the existing external amenity space at the front / side of the building by creating a flexible, accessible, and weather-protected outdoor sensory garden with associated pergola that will support the organisation's charitable activities and improve well being opportunities for service users, staff, volunteers, and visitors (see site location below).

Application Content

This application comprises:

- Application form
- This covering letter / statement
- Heritage Statement (Ian Rowan Heritage Consultant)
- Design and Access Statement (Hawthorn Design)
- The following drawings (Hawthorn Design):

  - 219 PLN L 01 - Location Plan
  - 219 PLN E 01 - Existing Elevations
  - 219 PLN L 02 - Existing Site Plan
  - 219 PLN L 02 - Existing Site Plan (Pergola Overlay)
  - 219 PLN E 02 - Proposed Elevations (Pergola over Sensory Garden)
  - 219 PLN E 03 - Proposed Details
  - 219 PLN P 01 - Proposed Floor Plan

About the Applicant

The Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People (the Society) was founded in 1922.

It is a small, independent local charity, offering a programme of practical support and equipment to address the challenges of sight loss.

The heart of its work is to promote the well-being and independence of blind and partially sighted people in Bury and surrounding areas.

The Society relies solely on grants, donations and local fundraising to maintain these services.

The Site and Context

The application site comprises Wolstenholme House, a mid-19th century building located on Tenterden Street (see photograph on following page).

The building was constructed in the mid 19th Century, Regency in character, with elements of the Victorian era displayed. It has an Ashlar stone frontage, slate roof, and is constructed from brick to the side and rear.

It sits on the south western fringe of Bury Town Centre, in a zone characterised by mainly office, administrative and small scale commercial enterprises.

The site is located within the Bury Town Centre Conservation Area.

Wolstenholme House:

Whilst listed buildings are quite close by (see extract from Historic England map below, identifying listed buildings with blue symbols), such is the lack of direct intervisibility with the application site that their integrity and settings will be unaffected by the proposal.

The application building, whilst unlisted, is acknowledged to be a non-designated heritage asset, and it clearly makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The wider Conservation Area is characterised by a mix of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings, contributing to a high-quality historic townscape with strong architectural and historic significance.

The Proposal

The application seeks full permission for the installation of a modest, simple, lightweight, contemporary pergola structure - measuring approximately 4m x 3m, with a height of circa 2.5m – at the side of the application property.

The pergola will be constructed from powder-coated aluminium in an anthracite grey finish.

It will incorporate a louvred roof system, integrated drainage, low level lighting and retractable screens to cater for different weather conditions.

It will be discretely positioned centrally within the recessed courtyard space at the side of the property, set well back from the road.

It is designed to be subordinate in scale and lightweight and understated in its appearance.

It has been formulated to ensure that:

- It is visually secondary to the host building
- It does not interrupt key views of the principal elevation
- It sits comfortably within the spatial arrangement of the site

Importantly, the proposal will deliver significant community and accessibility benefits, providing a sheltered outdoor environment and small sensory garden for those catered for by the Society. The space will support sensory activities, therapeutic use, and year-round community engagement.

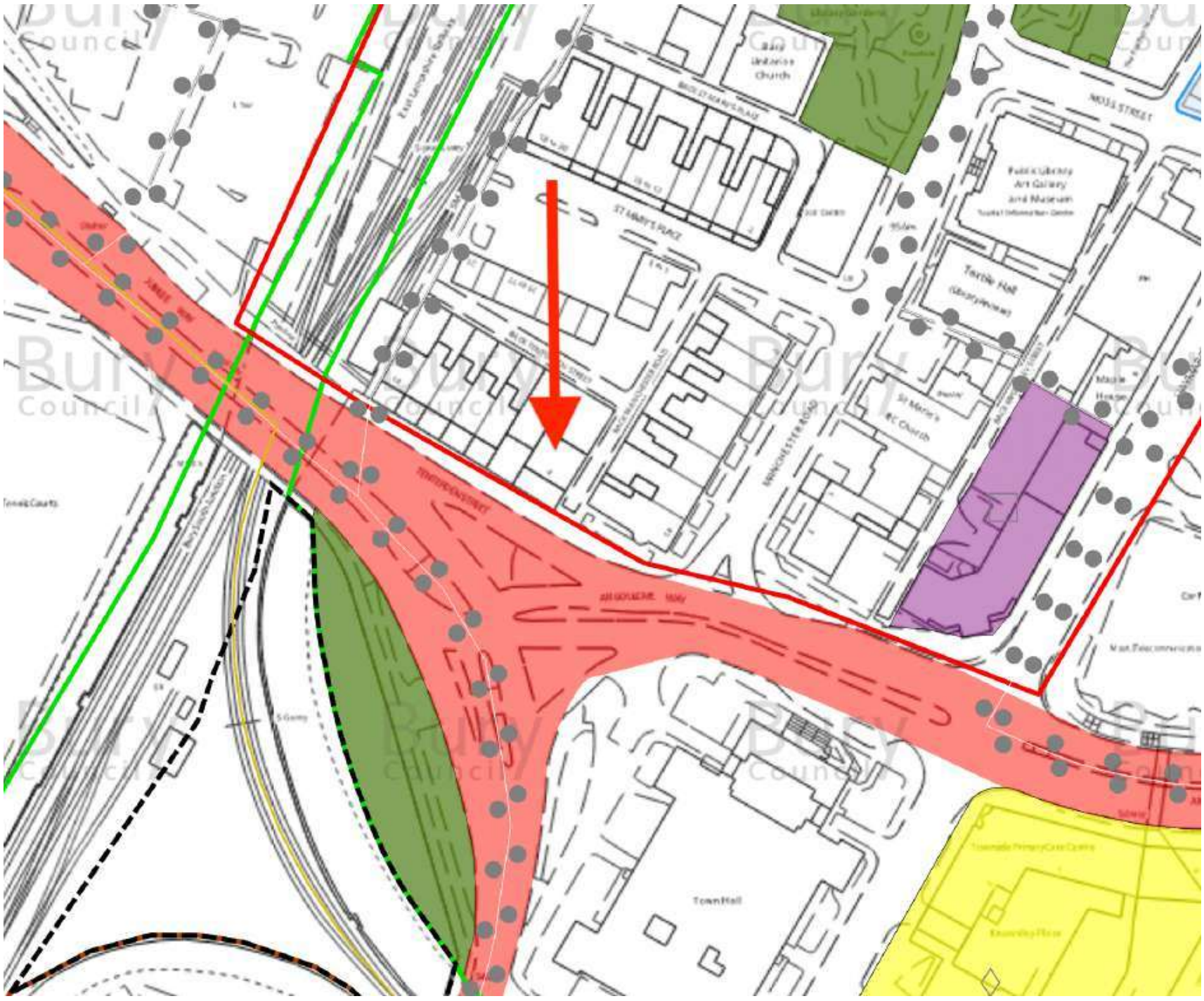
It is also worth highlighting that, while the proposal is not seeking a temporary planning permission, such is the simplicity of the proposed structure that it is very easily and quickly reversible / removable, and – sat simply on the ground – will not require any connections to the host building.

Policy Considerations

The development plan currently comprises the following documents:

- Bury UDP (adopted in 1997)
- Places for Everyone (adopted in March 2024)

As shown on the extract below from the online Policies Map, the application site does not fall within any specific policy allocation or designation aside from its location in the Conservation Area.



UDP Policies

Policy EN1 'Built Environment' states that the Council will seek to protect, preserve and enhance the character, appearance and amenity of the Borough's built environment.

Sister Policy EN1/1 'Visual Amenity' states that development will not be permitted where proposals would have a detrimental effect on, *inter alia*, public views or prominent / important buildings, especially those in areas of architectural or historic interest.

Policy EN1/2 ‘Townscape and Built Design’ states that favourable consideration will be given to proposals which do not have an unacceptable adverse effect on character and townscape.

We suggest that there is no conflict with the above suite of policies in that the proposal is of a modest scale and is discretely sited within a recessed area to the side of the building, set back from the road and wider public views. It is lightweight in form and understated in its appearance, ensuring that it does not detract from the visual amenity of the street scene or the character of the area.

The development has been carefully designed to ensure that it remains visually subordinate to the host building and does not adversely affect important views or the townscape, thereby preserving the character and appearance of the built environment in accordance with Policies EN1, EN1/1 and EN1/2.

In respect of built heritage, Policy EN2 ‘Conservation and Listed Buildings’ seeks to preserve the Borough's built heritage through the control of development, especially that affecting Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and areas of local historical importance.

Policy EN2/1 ‘Character of Conservation Areas’ states that the Council will take action as appropriate to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Borough's Conservation Areas. It states that the Council will be especially encouraging of the following measures:

- retain, replace and restore features of historical and architectural interest;
- retain and enhance existing landscape features including trees, parks and gardens;
- initiate and promote environmental improvement/enhancement schemes such as landscaping, refurbishment of street furniture, traffic management and pedestrian schemes;
- remove dereliction and bring unused land or buildings back into beneficial use;
- prepare and promote design guidelines to ensure sympathetic development.

Policy EN2/2 ‘Conservation Area Control’ states that development only be acceptable if it preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area, having regard to the nature of the development in terms of its bulk, height, materials, colour, design and detailing; the relationship between the proposed development and the architectural and visual qualities of the surrounding area; and the impact of the proposal on the character or appearance of the area and the fabric of the existing building.

In consideration of the above policies, the proposal has been sensitively designed and located so as to preserve the significance of the Conservation Area and the contribution made by the host building as a non-designated heritage asset.

Again, the pergola is positioned to the side of the building, outside of the principal façade and key viewpoints, ensuring that important architectural features and views are unaffected.

The development does not impact on or result in any loss of historic fabric and is fully reversible in nature. Its modest scale, simple form and use of appropriate contemporary materials ensure that it integrates comfortably within its surroundings without appearing visually intrusive. The proposal will not therefore harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and, through the introduction of a small sensory garden, will bring a currently underutilised area into active and beneficial use. As such, the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the area and accords with Policies EN2, EN2/1 and EN2/2.

Policy CF1 'Proposals for New and Improved Community Facilities' states that such proposals will generally be looked on favourably by the Council.

Sister Policy CF1/1 'Location of New Community Facilities' states that such proposals for new and improved community facilities will be considered with regard to impact on residential amenity and the local environment; traffic generation and car parking provision; the scale and size of the development; if the use is intended to serve a local community, or catchment area, the suitability of the chosen location in relation to that community or catchment area; accessibility by public and private transport; and - particularly important in this case - the needs and requirements of the disabled.

The proposal is consistent with the above policies in that it will provide an improved community facility that supports the continued operation of an established local charitable organisation serving the needs of blind and partially sighted people. The development will enhance the usability of the site by creating a safe, accessible and weather-protected outdoor space for year-round use, directly benefiting service users, staff and visitors. The proposal is modest in scale and appropriate to its context, giving rise to no adverse impact on residential amenity or the local environment, and will not generate any traffic or parking demand. The site is sustainably located within the urban area and is accessible by a range of transport modes. Importantly, the design places a strong emphasis on accessibility and inclusivity, directly responding to the needs and requirements of disabled users.

Places for Everyone Policies

Policy JP-P1 'Sustainable Places' seeks to ensure that all development contributes to the creation of high quality, liveable and sustainable environments. It promotes places that are distinctive and respect local character, visually attractive, socially inclusive and accessible to all. Development should be adaptable, durable and resource-efficient, while also being safe, functional and easy to navigate. The policy places strong emphasis on inclusive design, community wellbeing, connectivity, and the provision of high quality green infrastructure and public realm, ensuring that places are comfortable, resilient and supportive of a wide range of users.

The proposal is consistent with Policy JP-P1 in that it represents a small scale, well designed and sensitive intervention that respects the character and setting of the Conservation Area, while enhancing the usability of the site. It introduces a good quality, accessible outdoor space

that is specifically designed to meet the needs of blind and partially sighted users, thereby strongly supporting social inclusion, independence and community interaction. The scheme makes efficient use of an underutilised area, incorporates durable and low maintenance materials, and improves the environmental quality of the site through the introduction of a sensory garden. It is functional, adaptable and easy to use, while also providing a comfortable and sheltered environment that promotes well-being. Overall, the proposal contributes positively to the creation of a sustainable, inclusive and attractive place in accordance with the objectives of Policy JP-P1.

Policy JP-P2 'Heritage' seeks to ensure that the historic environment and heritage assets, and their settings, are positively conserved, sustained and enhanced. It promotes a proactive and informed approach to managing change, ensuring that the significance of heritage assets is properly understood and taken into account in the design process. The policy encourages development that integrates sensitive, high quality contemporary design with historic context, delivering public benefits such as improved accessibility, environmental quality and social well-being. It also supports opportunities to better reveal, interpret and enjoy heritage assets, while ensuring that proposals protect important elements of historic character and identity and accord with national planning policy.

The proposal is consistent with Policy JP-P2 in that it represents a carefully considered and sensitive intervention that preserves the significance of both the Conservation Area and the host building as a non-designated heritage asset. The pergola is modest in scale, reversibly constructed and positioned to the side of the building, ensuring that key architectural features and views of the principal elevation remain unaffected. As noted earlier, it does not involve any loss of historic fabric and has been designed to sit comfortably within its setting through the use of simple, high-quality materials and a contemporary but respectful design approach. The development also delivers clear public benefits by enhancing the usability of the site for a local charitable organisation, improving accessibility and providing a high quality outdoor space that supports well-being and community engagement. As such, the proposal conserves and enhances the historic environment while contributing positively to place-making, consistent with the objectives of Policy JP-P2.

Policy JP-P6 'Health' seeks to ensure that new development contributes positively to health and well-being, and helps to reduce health inequalities. It requires proposals to maximise health benefits while avoiding adverse impacts, support healthy lifestyles through design that encourages activity and accessibility, and ensure that developments which may significantly affect health are appropriately assessed. The policy emphasises the role of the built environment in creating safe, inclusive and supportive spaces that promote physical and mental wellbeing.

The proposal is consistent with Policy JP-P6 in that it delivers clear and direct health and well-being benefits through the creation of a safe, accessible and sheltered outdoor environment specifically designed for blind and partially sighted users. The sensory garden and pergola will support therapeutic activity, social interaction and year-round outdoor use, thereby promoting both physical and mental wellbeing. The scheme has been carefully designed to ensure ease of

movement, comfort and accessibility, encouraging users to engage with the space in a safe and inclusive manner. The proposal will not give rise to any negative health impacts, and instead represents a positive intervention that supports healthier, fulfilled lifestyles and reduces social isolation, consistent with the objectives of Policy JP-P6.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development accords with both strands of the statutory development plan, namely the adopted Bury Unitary Development Plan and the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan. The proposal has been carefully designed to respect the character and appearance of the site and its Conservation Area context, preserve heritage significance, and deliver meaningful community, accessibility and wellbeing benefits. It represents a proportionate and policy-compliant form of development that is consistent with the relevant design, heritage, community and health policies of both plans.

Consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

The proposal is also consistent with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), which is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

Paragraph 11 establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and the proposal clearly represents sustainable development by delivering social, environmental and accessibility benefits without giving rise to adverse impacts. Paragraph 135 requires development to be sympathetic to local character and history while maintaining a high standard of design; the proposal achieves this through its modest scale, sensitive siting and complementary material palette.

In heritage terms, Chapter 16 of the NPPF is particularly relevant. Paragraph 205 requires that great weight be given to the conservation of heritage assets, while Paragraph 208 requires that any harm to heritage significance should be clearly justified. In this instance, it is considered that the proposal will not result in harm to the significance of the Conservation Area or the non-designated heritage asset. However, if any harm were to be alleged, it would be at the very lowest end of the *"less than substantial harm"* spectrum as defined in Paragraph 212.

In such circumstances, Paragraph 212 requires that this harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The public benefits in this case are clear, including:

- The enhancement of an established local charitable facility
- The provision of a high quality, accessible outdoor space for blind and partially sighted users
- Improved opportunities for social interaction, therapeutic activity and community engagement
- Promotion of health, well-being and inclusivity
- Increased usability of the site throughout the year
- The bringing into active use of an underutilised part of the site

We suggest that those benefits decisively outweigh any negligible level of harm that may be identified.

Furthermore, Paragraph 216 confirms that decisions affecting non-designated heritage assets should take into account the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset, with a balanced judgement applied. The proposal clearly satisfies this test.

Accordingly, the proposal is fully consistent with the NPPF, and the Framework lends significant weight in favour of granting planning permission.

Overall Planning Balance and Conclusions

In summary, the proposal represents a modest, well-considered and high quality form of development that has been carefully designed to respond to its heritage context while delivering clear and meaningful benefits. It preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, safeguards the significance of the host building, and introduces a valuable new facility that will enhance the operation of an important local charity.

There are no adverse impacts that would outweigh the benefits of the scheme. On the contrary, the proposal delivers strong social, accessibility and well-being benefits, consistent with the development plan, and is supported by national planning policy.

Taken as a whole, the planning balance weighs decisively in favour of the proposal. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.

If further information is required or if the allocated officer wishes to discuss the proposal or meet, please do not hesitate to contact Richard Gee at the above offices.

Yours faithfully
for Roman Summer Associates Ltd

Richard Gee
Director