

HERITAGE STATEMENT

In support of Application for Planning Permission for change of use
371 Bury New Road, Prestwich
August 2024

Address of property

371 Bury New Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 1AW

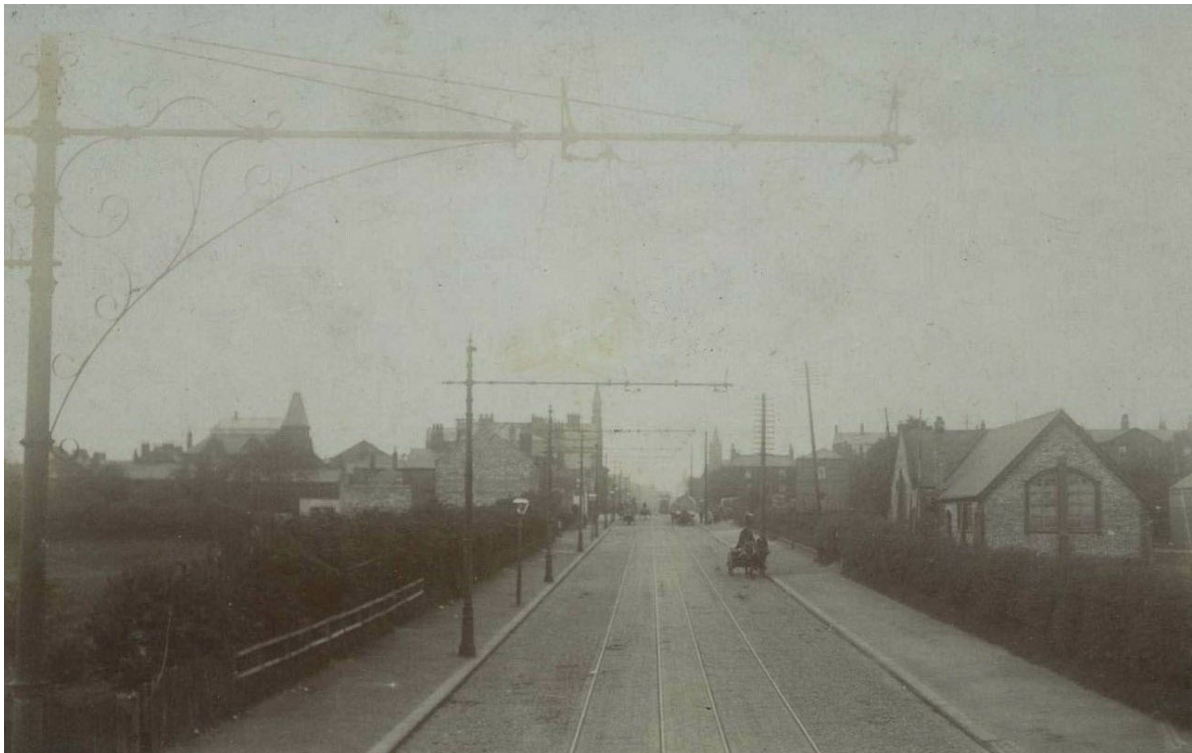
Purpose of Heritage Statement

This Statement is provided in support of an Application for Planning Permission for change of use of the ground floor of 371 Bury New Road, Prestwich from Use Class E(c)(ii) to Use Class E(e), together with the associated internal sub-division of existing open-plan office space at ground floor level to form four small enclosed rooms which are to be used for yoga and holistic therapy purposes by the Creative Calm Studio (the tenants of the property's first floor since 2016), thereby facilitating delivery of additional health and wellbeing services.

The proposed changed use and associated internal works will have no impact on the external appearance of the property.

Description of the property

The property is the most southerly of eight forming a two/ three storey terrace extending northwards along Bury New Road to its junction with Hacking Street. However, whilst the other properties forming the terrace were constructed in the Edwardian era, Number 371 was constructed in the early 1930's on a vacant site between and directly abutting Number 373 and a freestanding cinema (The "Picturedrome") to the south which was constructed in 1912 and demolished to make way for a four storey residential development constructed in 2001.



View northwards along Bury New Road showing, on the left, the exposed gable of Number 373 shortly before construction of the "Picturedrome" cinema. Number 371 was constructed some 20+ years later.

The unmade access road at the rear of the property, accessed from Bury New Road via Hacking Street, is a full floor level lower than Bury New Road and as a consequence, Number 371 is three storeys high at rear access road level (lower ground floor and two storeys above) and two storeys fronting on to Bury New Road (ground floor and one storey above).

Consistent with the other properties forming the terrace, the first floor of Number 371's frontage on to Bury New Road is constructed in smooth dark red brick with narrow black ash mortar joints whilst its hipped roof is covered with grey roof slates. The property's bay window and three 'punched' windows have, in the relatively recent past, been replaced with PVC equivalents.

A shop front extends across most of the ground floor, with doors at each end: the northernmost leads directly into the ground floor of the property whilst the southernmost provides access to a flight of stairs up to first floor level. Whilst the shop front (potentially the original) includes some 'modernised' features (for example, the deep fascia immediately above the windows – compare with Number 373's restored shop front in the image below) it has not been blighted by the introduction of roller shutters.



Frontage of Number 371 on to Bury New Road with Number 373 to the right – Number 373's frontage was restored nearly twenty years ago through funding made available from the Council/ English Heritage jointly funded Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme

Conservation Area context

The St Mary's Conservation Area was first designated in 1993 and a conservation area appraisal and associated management proposals were prepared for discussion with area residents as part of a consultation process undertaken during 2007-2009. During 2008 a working group was established to develop the detail of the plan and final proposals were agreed by the Local Area Partnership and Council in 2009.

The conservation area is located on the southern edge of Prestwich village, immediately adjacent to Bury New Road (A56), approximately mid-way between Manchester and Bury. The conservation area is comparatively large, lying primarily to the west of Bury New Road, around and to the south of Church Lane but also incorporating St Mary's Park and Prestwich Clough, containing both formal and informal open space together with woodland. It also includes 19th and early 20th century residential development around St Ann's Road and Prestwich Park Road South, and a separate quarter, to the east of Bury New Road, around Rectory Lane. The conservation area is surrounded by more recent suburban development which together with the growth of landscape cover, conceals much of its undulating topography.

The Grade I listed St. Mary's church lies at the heart of the conservation area and all of the area's listed structures are located either within the church precincts or its immediate surroundings.



Map showing the extent of the St Mary's Conservation Area (Number 371 Bury New Road circled)

Between 1999 and 2006 the Council and English Heritage jointly funded a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme for the conservation area. This scheme focused on the restoration and repair of those properties subsequently identified as forming the 'Commercial Gateway' to Prestwich Village with grant support focused on bringing buildings into sound economic use whilst undertaking works to enhance their architectural value. The scheme is considered as having had mixed success, with some of the restored buildings subsequently being sold on and falling back into disuse but with others, such as 373 Bury New Road, being successfully restored and in continual use.

The Council has adopted a number of Policies aimed at protecting the area's character, amongst which Policy 4 states *"It is proposed that a consistent line is taken in negotiating and enforcing changes to the Bury New Road commercial terrace, which runs south from Church Lane, to achieve a group of buildings more in-keeping with the area's traditional character"*.

Heritage asset evaluation

Number 371 is the most southerly of the commercial group of properties which extend northwards along Bury New Road, each side of Hacking Street, as far as the former's junction with Church Lane and which provide the introduction to Prestwich Village centre when travelling from the south - the so-called 'Commercial Gateway'.

At ground level the properties are mostly given over to a mix of retail and commercial use, with a high proportion of frontages no longer following the original area character and suffering from the introduction of solid roller shutters.

These commercial properties are primarily of late 19th/ early 20th century construction in a mix of building forms, heights and design. Red brick and slate are the dominant external materials with some black and white timbering. The Council's Conservation Area documentation describes the properties as forming a *"Two and three storey mixed Victorian and Edwardian brick terrace rising to Church Lane junction. Jumble of roofs, ridge lines, elevations and shop fronts. Much altered but important in scale and grouping to Bury New Road frontage"*.

The terrace of properties extending southwards along Bury New Road from Hacking Street are much plainer than those to the north, with few architectural features other than stone (albeit generally painted) lintels and cills to window openings. The exception is Number 373 which features a symmetrical pair of two-storey timber clad bay windows and a frontage which was restored nearly twenty years ago using funding made available through the Council/ English Heritage jointly funded Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme.

The scale, massing, proportions, materials and overall appearance of the entire terrace stand in stark contrast to those of the large apartment block at its southern end, constructed in 2001 on the site of the former "Picturedrome" cinema in 2001 and abutting Number 371. Here, the brickwork is more orange and much lighter in colour with light coloured natural mortar joints, and the building's windows both squarer rather than more vertical in proportion and uniformly sized.

The proposed works

The internal works associated with the proposed change of use will be limited to the formation of four internal rooms whose proposed uses are as follows:

- A larger room that will serve as a small yoga studio and meeting space. This room will be available for yoga classes, sound baths, parent and baby groups as well as other services which the applicant plans to offer;
- Three smaller rooms that will be available for holistic therapies and counselling sessions including talking therapies as well as Reiki, Reflexology and other manual therapies.

The rooms will be created through the erection of non-structural plasterboard/ timber stud partitioning extending either from floor level or from half height partitioning already in place up to the property's fire resisting plasterboard ceiling installed in 2002.

Impact on the asset

The proposed use of the property's ground floor and associated internal works will have no impact on its external appearance.

Relevant planning history

Since 2002, there have been two approved Applications for Planning Permission relating to 371 Bury New Road.

The first of these, approved in that year (Application reference 38571/01), related to the change of use of the entire property from a shop to offices (Use Class B1) with a self-contained flat above.

In 2016, a further Application (reference 60612), relating to use of the first floor of the property as a holistic therapy studio for yoga activities and wellness training, was approved. Approval of the current Application will facilitate the expansion of this yoga and therapy studio on to the floor immediately below.

A number of other approved Applications for Planning Permission relating to adjacent properties within the terrace of which Number 371 is a part, have also been made in the recent past. These include:

- 387 Bury New Road: Extension and conversion of lower ground and ground floors to form 2 no. apartments; external alterations including removal of 1 no. ground floor window and addition of 3 no. ground floor window (Application ref 68999, 2022)
- 395-399 Bury New Road: Change of use of existing second floor from office use Class E to form a residential self-contained second floor apartment, planning use class C3 (Application ref 66069, 2020)
- 395, 397 & 399 Bury New Road: Change of use of first floor into an extension of the Cuckoo Café Bar (A3) and the use of the second floor into offices and studios (Application ref 64844, 2019)
- 381 Bury New Road: Change of use from shop (Class A1) to cosmetic tattooing clinic (Application ref 63154, 2018)
- 395 & 397 Bury New Road: Change of use of ground and basement floors from retail (Class A1) to café bar (Class A3) (Application ref 56144, 2013)
- 383 Bury New Road: Change of use of first floor flat (Use Class C3) to offices (Use Class B1) (Application ref 48772, 2007)
- 373 Bury New Road: New shop front & bay windows; dormer & Velux rooflights to rear (Application ref 02/38701, 2002)

Statement of need

With a continuing increase in demand for its range of services, the owners of the Creative Calm Studio have been seeking additional accommodation in Prestwich that can be opened as a Holistic Therapy Centre. One of the key criteria in their search has been the identification of suitable ground floor premises which will enable suitable access by those members of the local community keen to enjoy the benefits of yoga and other holistic practices but who find stairs to be a challenge, as well as for local parents and their children who also struggle with stairs.

The recent unexpected availability of the ground floor of 371 Bury New Road, directly beneath the existing yoga studio, therefore presents a solution which readily meets their projected needs.

As yoga teachers, the owners of Creative Calm Studio appreciate first-hand the benefits of yoga and other holistic practices and are aware, both from their experience as well as from other local therapists, that what is proposed will be welcomed by the local community. Particularly post-Covid, many people are suffering from stress and anxiety as well as experiencing physical struggles with back issues etc. For some, the 'work from home' culture has exacerbated these issues.

The proposed Holistic Therapy Centre is intended to respond to such problems, providing spaces that will encourage self-care and foster a focus on wellness within the community.

The centre will create a small space for yoga activities suited to a ground floor studio, such as chair yoga, yoga therapy, parent and baby yoga as well as sound baths, chakra healing and other related activities. It is also hoped to use this space for classes for the local Special Educational Needs (SEN) community, which includes children as well as adults. This room will also be available for use by local groups including parent and baby wellbeing groups, and the owners plan to offer a weekly community yoga class at no cost to participants.

The proposed therapy rooms will be of a holistic nature, offering a combination of talking therapies, manual therapies and energy therapies. The focus will be on the wellbeing of the individual, which it is hoped will spill out into the local community. A number of local therapists have also approached the owners over the possibility of collaborating with them, so the centre will also provide additional local employment.

The owners hope to be able to remain in Prestwich and by providing these services to the community, continue to contribute to the wellness of the community and help deliver social value.

Conclusion

Over the last eight years, the Creative Calm Studio has proved to be an important asset both to individuals and the wider community. The proposed change of use of the ground floor of 371 Bury New Road and the investment the studio owners are committed to making will not only provide them with the opportunity to provide an enhanced range of yoga and holistic therapy services but also to continue to support the local community, and the regeneration of Prestwich Village. At the same time, early reuse of the currently vacant accommodation will ensure that it continues to remain in good order, contributing positively to the wider streetscape.