



Heritage Note

Westholme, St Ann's Road, Prestwich

September 2026

Introduction

- I.1 This Heritage Note has been prepared by Adapt Heritage on behalf of the Applicant in support of a planning application relating to boundary railings and entrance gates at Westholme, St Ann's Road, Prestwich (the 'Site').
- I.2 The proposals involve the retention of the existing metal railings and vehicular entrance gates, together with alterations to the treatment around the pedestrian entrance to the property (the 'Proposed Development'). The railings and gates were installed in response to security concerns associated with the property and provide an enhanced level of security for its residents.
- I.3 The Site lies within the St Mary's Conservation Area. Accordingly, the purpose of this Heritage Note is to identify the significance of the Conservation Area, including the contribution made by the Site, and to assess the effect of the Proposed Development upon its character, appearance and significance.
- I.4 Under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Bury Council, in exercising its planning functions in respect of land within a conservation area, must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- I.5 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2026) provides the Government's national planning policy for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements, Policy HE5 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, with the level of detail proportionate to their importance and sufficient to understand the potential effect of the proposals upon their significance.
- I.6 This Heritage Note has been informed by a site visit undertaken by Adapt Heritage, the Site photographs provided at **Appendix I**, a review of the Proposed Development and relevant historic mapping, together with Bury Council's published Conservation Area documentation.

Site and Heritage Context

- I.7 Westholme is a detached residential property located on the southern side of St Ann's Road, Prestwich. The dwelling is set back from the road within a substantial residential plot, with a large front garden separating it from St Ann's Road.
- I.8 The Site is accessed from St Ann's Road by separate vehicular and pedestrian entrances. The frontage comprises an existing masonry boundary wall and stone entrance piers, together with established privet hedging and mature vegetation. Metal railings are positioned along the boundary in association with the existing wall, with gates at the vehicular and pedestrian entrances. The existing arrangement and its relationship with the established frontage are illustrated by the Site photographs at **Appendix I**.

- I.9 The Site lies within the St Mary's Conservation Area, which encompasses the historic core around St Mary's Church and Church Lane, St Mary's Park, Prestwich Clough and surrounding areas of residential development. Bury Council's published documentation identifies 19th and early 20th century residential development around St Ann's Road and Prestwich Park Road South as an established component of the designated area. The Site is situated towards its eastern end, within an area predominantly comprising residential properties.

St Mary's Conservation Area

Overview of Historic Development

- I.10 St Ann's Road formed part of the 19th century Prestwich Park estate, which developed from around the mid 19th century as a residential suburb of Prestwich. The estate comprised detached and semi-detached houses set within generous gardens, including a number of large villas along Prestwich Park North, now St Ann's Road.
- I.11 Development continued throughout the 19th century, resulting in a varied residential area. Bury Council's appraisal particularly notes the individuality of the surviving houses along St Ann's Road.

Summary of Significance

- I.12 The significance of the St Mary's Conservation Area derives from the architectural, historic and landscape interest associated with the historic development of Prestwich. This includes the historic core around St Mary's Church and Church Lane, together with St Mary's Park, Prestwich Clough and the surrounding areas of historic residential development.
- I.13 Of particular relevance to the Site is the 19th century development of the Prestwich Park estate, which established a suburban residential character comprising substantial detached and semi-detached houses and villas within generous plots, with considerable individuality in their architectural treatment.
- I.14 Landscape is an important component of this significance. Bury Council's Landscape Appraisal identifies substantial houses within large plots as characteristic of the area and specifically identifies boundary hedges as important features, particularly where they delineate public and private space along street frontages. Mature trees are similarly important, with their number and variety contributing to the wider Conservation Area's notably verdant character.
- I.15 Boundary treatments form part of the established relationship between buildings, gardens and streets and are not uniform throughout the Conservation Area. The Council's Landscape Appraisal expressly encourages the provision and/or reinstatement of boundary walls, railings and/or hedges where appropriate.

Contribution made by the Site

- I.16 Westholme contributes to this part of the Conservation Area through its established residential character, generous plot and mature landscaped setting.
- I.17 The dwelling is substantially set back from St Ann's Road behind a large front garden, with mature trees and vegetation reinforcing its landscaped setting. As illustrated by the Site photographs at **Appendix I**, the frontage is defined by an existing masonry wall, stone entrance piers and established privet hedge, which has grown above the height of the wall and forms a prominent element in views from St Ann's Road.
- I.18 The contribution made by the Site therefore derives principally from the relationship between the dwelling, its generous plot and mature landscaped setting, together with the established wall, stone entrance piers, hedge and vegetation along its frontage.



Heritage Legislation and Planning Policy

- I.19 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires, in the exercise of planning functions in respect of buildings or other land within a conservation area, that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- I.20 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (August 2026) provides national policy for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Policy HE4 requires heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, with development avoiding or minimising harm. Policy HE5 requires the significance of affected heritage assets and the effect of development upon that significance to be assessed proportionately, including whether proposals would have a positive effect, no effect upon significance, result in harm or cause total loss.
- I.21 Policy HE6 requires substantial weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Of particular relevance, Policy HE9 relates specifically to Conservation Areas and requires development to conserve buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to their character or appearance. Proposals which conserve those elements should be supported.
- I.22 At the local level, the adopted Bury Unitary Development Plan ('UDP') (1997) remains part of the statutory development plan. Policies EN2, EN2/1 and EN2/2 seek to preserve the Borough's built heritage and the character and appearance of its Conservation Areas.
- I.23 More detailed guidance is provided by Bury Council's published documentation for the St Mary's Conservation Area. The Management Plan recognises the potential for incremental alterations to affect its character and appearance, including changes to boundary treatments, while also identifying the provision or reinstatement of walls and railings alongside appropriate planting as potential enhancement measures.
- I.24 Historic England's *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* provides further guidance on understanding significance and assessing the effects of development.

Impact Assessment

- I.25 The Proposed Development seeks the retention of the existing metal railings and vehicular gates along the boundary of Westholme, together with alterations to the treatment of the pedestrian entrance. The principal heritage consideration is whether the boundary treatment, as proposed to be amended, would preserve the character and appearance of the St Mary's Conservation Area and conserve its significance.

Boundary Railings

- I.26 The principle of a metal railing boundary treatment is not considered harmful to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Boundary treatments vary throughout the designated area and Bury Council's Landscape Appraisal expressly identifies walls, railings and hedges as appropriate forms of boundary treatment, including their provision or reinstatement where appropriate.
- I.27 In design terms, it would have been preferable for the railings to be positioned further back from the existing boundary wall, allowing the wall and hedge to remain more clearly expressed as the principal boundary treatment. As installed, the railings are positioned immediately adjacent to, and slightly forward of, the wall.
- I.28 Importantly, however, their installation has not required the loss of either the established masonry wall or privet hedge. Since their installation, the hedge has been allowed to grow above the wall and now substantially screens the railings in views from St Ann's Road. As demonstrated by the Site photographs at



Appendix I, the hedge remains the predominant feature along much of the frontage, with only limited sections of railing readily apparent in public views.

- I.29 The established hedge therefore substantially mitigates the visual effect arising from the positioning of the railings. Where the railings remain visible, their visually permeable form allows the established vegetation and garden beyond to remain appreciable. Their retention has not altered the generous garden setting of Westholme or resulted in the loss of the mature landscaping and established boundary features through which the Site principally contributes to the Conservation Area.
- I.30 Accordingly, while positioning the railings further back from the boundary wall would have represented a preferable design approach, the established hedge substantially limits their visual prominence in the streetscene. Together with the retention of the wall and mature landscaping, this means that the railings as installed do not materially erode the character, appearance or significance of the Conservation Area.

Pedestrian Entrance

- I.31 A different consideration arises at the pedestrian entrance. As presently installed, sections of railing extend around and above the existing stone entrance piers. This creates an awkward and incongruous arrangement which competes visually with the established stone piers and detracts from their legibility as features along the site frontage.
- I.32 This aspect of the existing installation is considered to have a localised adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- I.33 The Proposed Development directly addresses this adverse effect. The sections of fencing extending around and above the stone piers would be removed and replaced with a simpler treatment between the piers. The submitted drawing confirms that the railings extending over the gateposts would be removed and the adjoining fencing remade accordingly.
- I.34 The proposed alteration would restore a simpler and more coherent relationship at the pedestrian entrance, allowing the stone piers to remain clearly legible as established boundary features while retaining the necessary security of the property. The localised adverse effect associated with the existing arrangement would therefore be removed.

Entrance Gates

- I.35 Gated entrances form an established component of the character of the Conservation Area and are particularly consistent with its historic pattern of substantial residential properties occupying enclosed landscaped plots. Bury Council's assessment of the area records gated entrances associated with the Prestwich Park estate, including its original gated entrance lodges.
- I.36 The vehicular gates at Westholme provide a functional means of securing the property while maintaining visual permeability between St Ann's Road and the Site. Although relatively formal and contemporary in appearance, they remain subordinate elements within the substantially landscaped frontage.
- I.37 The gates do not result in the loss or concealment of the established wall, stone piers, hedge or mature vegetation, and their open design allows the landscaped character of the Site to remain appreciable. Their retention is therefore consistent with the established character of an enclosed residential plot and with other gated entrances found throughout the Conservation Area. They would not adversely affect its significance.



Conclusion

- I.38 Westholme forms part of the established residential development of St Ann's Road and makes a positive contribution to the St Mary's Conservation Area through the relationship between the dwelling, its generous plot and mature landscaped setting, including its established masonry wall, stone entrance piers and privet hedge.
- I.39 Metal railings are an established and acceptable form of boundary treatment within the Conservation Area. While it would have been preferable for the railings at Westholme to have been positioned further back from the existing boundary wall, the established privet hedge substantially screens them and limits their prominence within the streetscene. The wall, hedge and mature landscaping have also been retained and continue to define the character of the Site frontage.
- I.40 The existing arrangement around the pedestrian entrance is acknowledged to be incongruous and to have a localised adverse effect upon the appearance of the frontage. The Proposed Development would remove the sections of railing extending around and above the established stone entrance piers and provide a simpler and more coherent treatment, thereby removing this adverse effect. The entrance gates would remain as visually permeable and functional elements consistent with the established use of gated entrances within the Conservation Area.
- I.41 Taken as a whole, the Proposed Development would therefore retain a form of boundary treatment which is acceptable in principle, while addressing the localised adverse effect associated with the existing pedestrian entrance. The established wall, hedge, entrance piers and mature landscaping would continue to provide the predominant character of the Site frontage and maintain its contribution to the wider Conservation Area.
- I.42 Overall, the Proposed Development would result in no harm to the significance of the St Mary's Conservation Area and would preserve its character and appearance. It would therefore satisfy the statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, accord with the relevant heritage policies of the NPPF and Bury UDP, and be consistent with the Council's published guidance for the St Mary's Conservation Area.



Appendix I: Site Photographs



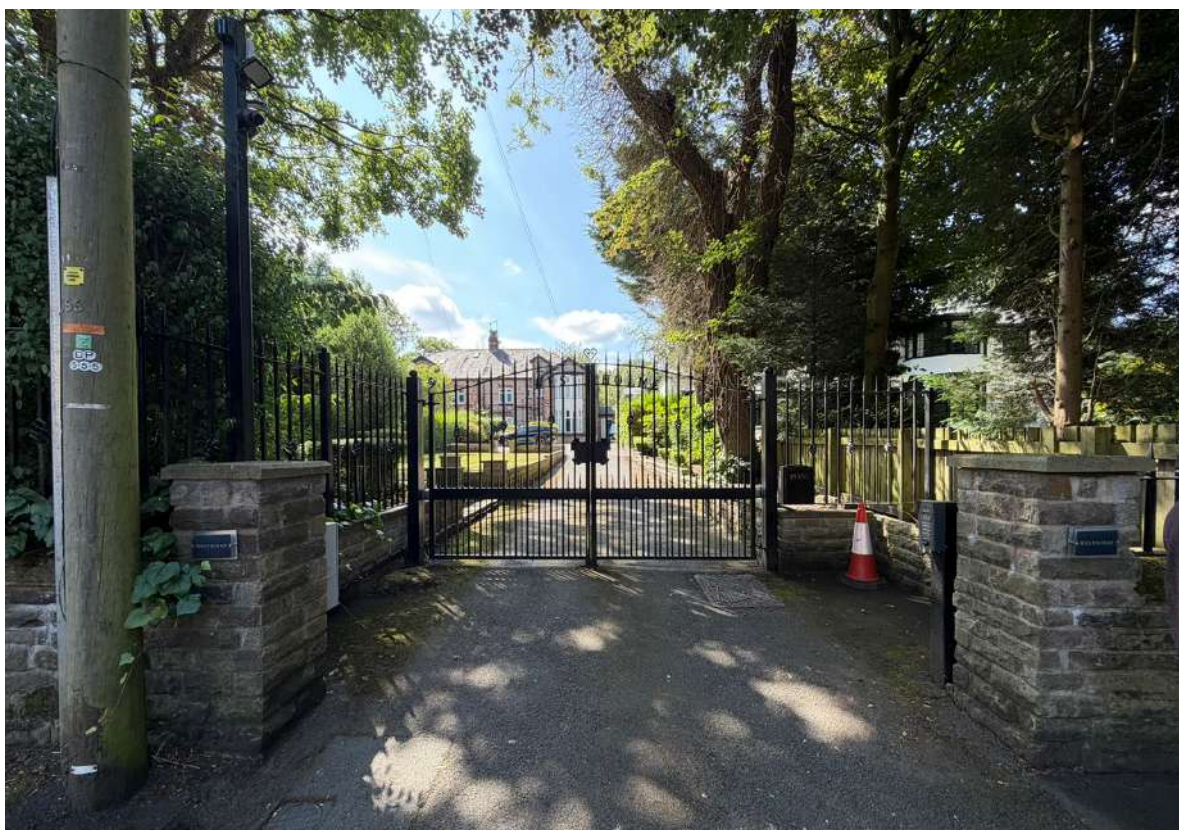


Figure A1.1: View of the Gates along St Ann's Road (2026)

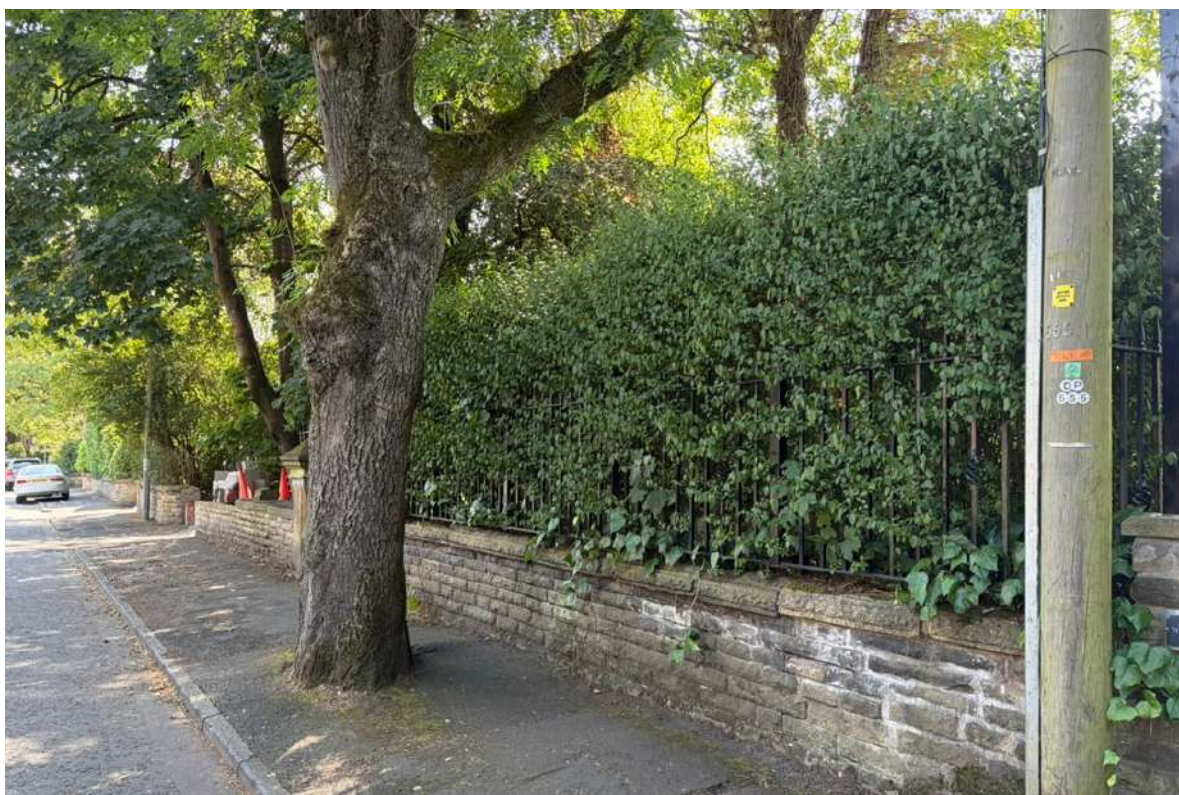


Figure A1.2: View of the Railings along St Ann's Road (2026)



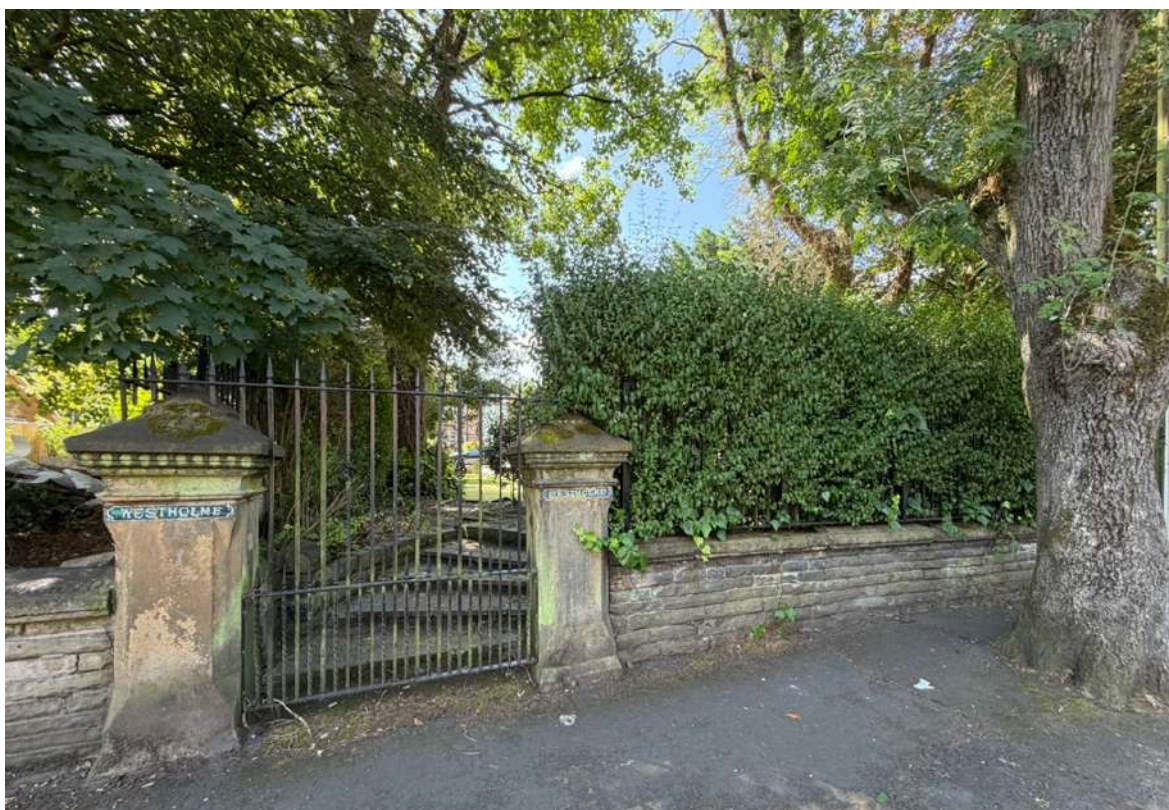


Figure A1.3: View of the Railings and Pedestrian Entrance along St Ann's Road (2026)



Figure A1.4: View of the Railings and Pedestrian Entrance along St Ann's Road (2026)





Figure A1.5: View of the Pedestrian Entrance along St Ann's Road (2026)



Figure A1.6: View of the Pedestrian Entrance along St Ann's Road (2026)



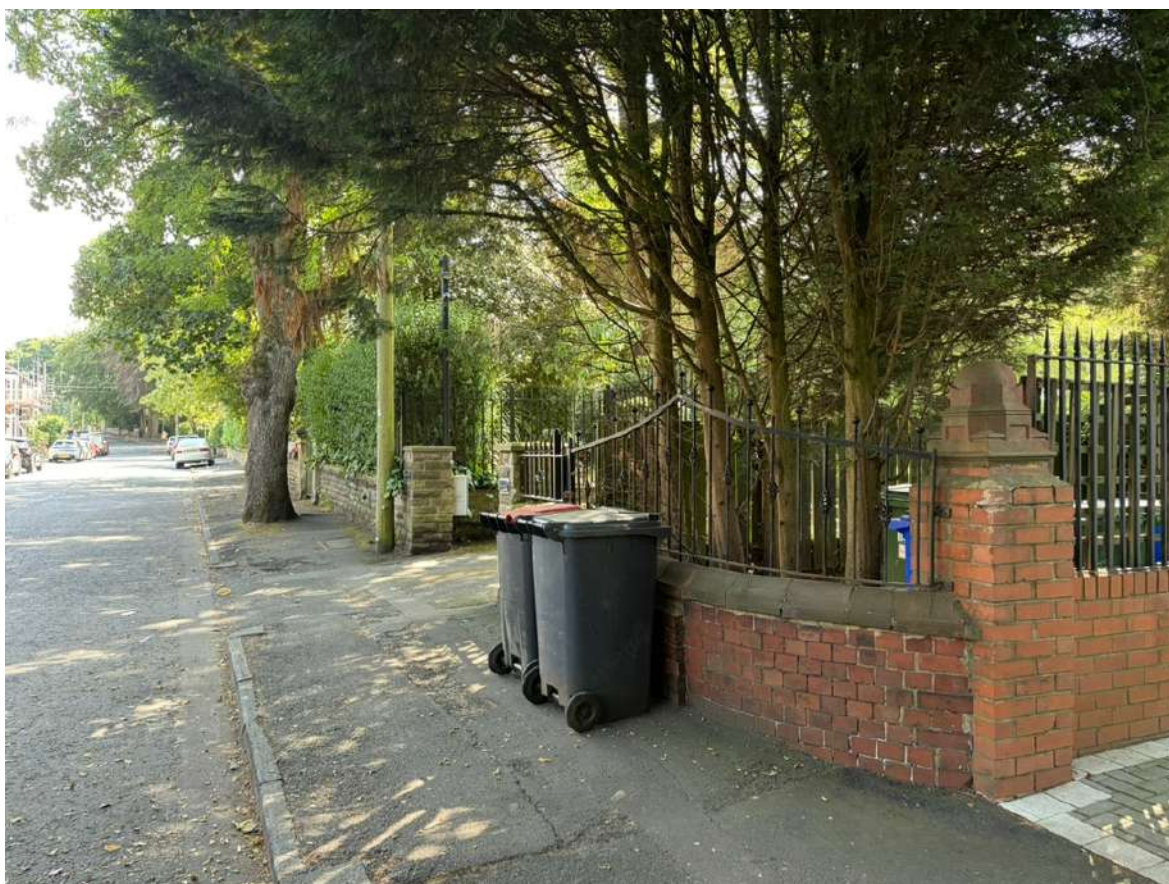


Figure A1.7: View along St Ann's Road (2026)



Figure A1.8: View along St Ann's Road (2026)





Figure A1.9: View along Prestwich Park Road South (2026)



Figure A1.10: View along Prestwich Park Road South (2026)

