



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

Our Ref: RG/RG/G1141/L001

Date: 9th September 2026

Dear Sir / Madam

Westholme, St Ann's Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 9LD

Retrospective householder planning application: retention and alteration of boundary railings and associated security gates

We are instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Michael Niven to submit this full retrospective householder planning application for the retention and alteration of black metal railings and associated security gates along the front boundary of Westholme adjoining St Ann's Road, Prestwich, and along parts of the side boundaries, as shown on the submitted drawings.





The application seeks to retain the majority of the existing installation, albeit alterations are proposed around the former pedestrian entrance gateposts. That proposed alteration seeks to restore a simpler and more coherent relationship at that pedestrian entrance, allowing the stone piers to remain clearly legible as established boundary features while retaining the necessary security of the property.

Application Content

This application comprises:

- Application form
- This covering letter / statement
- Heritage Statement (Adapt Heritage)
- The following drawings (Hawthorn Design):
 - 222-L01 – Location Plan
 - 222-E01 A – Existing Fencing Elevations
 - 222-E02 – Proposed Fencing Elevations
- *Annex A* of this letter provides photographs of boundary treatments in the proximate area and within the same Conservation Area. These demonstrate the array of frontage boundary treatments in the locality, including numerous examples of railings broadly similar to those promoted by this application. We respectfully suggest that those now form part of the local context and the character and appearance of this Conservation Area.

Background and reasons for the installation

The subject railings and gates were installed some time ago. Our client is uncertain of the exact date, and is currently attempting to locate the original invoice to be exact. It is for that reason that, on the application form, we have not declared that the works have already been carried out, as that would then require the insertion of an exact date that we are not currently aware of. Once that date is known, and rather than guessing a date at this stage, the application form will be corrected / reflected to state that.

Whilst they now understand the planning position, our clients were unaware at the time that planning permission was required, as their immediate neighbour has installed broadly similar railings / gates and (as noted above) there are many other similar examples in close proximity.

Given the period the railings have been in place, with no comments or concerns expressed by any party, it came as something of a surprise to our clients to receive the Council's Enforcement letter dated 21 May 2026 (reference 25/0420), which recorded an apparent complaint about the installation and requested removal of the railings / gate.



Our clients have taken that correspondence seriously. They have engaged with the Council's Enforcement team, and have instructed ourselves, Hawthorn Design Partnership (a highly experienced conservation-registrant architect), and Adapt Heritage to advise on the installation, its relationship with the Conservation Area and any appropriate amendments. This application presents the resulting proposals and supporting assessment for the LPA's consideration.

The installation responded to genuine domestic security concerns following numerous instances of trespass along our clients' drive. These incidents caused understandable concern for their own safety and that of their children. The railings and gates were selected to provide what was considered to be a discrete and proportionate means of controlling access to the property while retaining an open relationship with the landscaped frontage.

Our clients are Jewish and – like many others – have been concerned about recent antisemitic incidents in the Bury and north Manchester area, including events which have received widespread publicity. The attack at Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in October 2025 forms part of that wider context of concern for the local Jewish community. These circumstances reinforce their wish to maintain an effective and reassuring security boundary around their family home.

The application seeks to accommodate those security needs through a treatment which respects the character of the property and its surroundings. The supporting Heritage Note is proportionate to the proposal, and explains how that has been achieved while retaining the established boundary features and undertaking a targeted improvement around the pedestrian entrance.

The site and its surroundings

Westholme occupies a substantial residential plot on the southern side of St Ann's Road, within the St Mary's Conservation Area. The house is set well back from the road behind a generous front garden, with mature planting providing a strong landscape setting.

This part of the Conservation Area reflects the nineteenth-century development of the Prestwich Park estate. Its character includes substantial houses within generous gardens, considerable variety in architectural expression, a strong presence of trees, hedges and other planting, and a considerable array of frontage boundary treatments and security measures.

Westholme's contribution to that character arises principally from the relationship between the house, its spacious grounds and mature vegetation. Along the frontage, the established masonry wall, stone entrance piers and privet hedge remain important features.

As noted, boundary treatments in the surrounding area are very varied. The railings were chosen to be simple, understated and discrete, reflecting to an extent the broadly similar railings along the frontage of the immediately neighbouring property, Denewood. They also respond to the wider range of walls, railings, gates and hedges found locally. Photographs



illustrating those neighbouring / local boundary treatments in the same Conservation Area are included at *Annex A*.

These examples provide relevant context. The application nevertheless rests on the suitability of the treatment at Westholme itself, including the retention of its established boundary features and the substantial screening provided by its hedge.

The retained railings and gates

The existing wall, stone entrance piers, hedge and mature planting have been retained. Along much of the frontage, the established evergreen hedge immediately behind the railings substantially screens their outline and provides a natural backdrop against which they blend into the boundary. Indeed, as shown below, in many respects the railings become close to imperceptible when viewed against the context of the hedge at the immediate rear.



Where the railings are more visible, their open form allows views through to the vegetation and garden. They do not create the appearance of a continuous solid enclosure, and the landscaped character of the frontage remains readily apparent.

The vehicular gates similarly provide security while retaining visual permeability. These are set back discretely into the site, consistent with other gated entrances and the established pattern of enclosed residential plots within the Conservation Area, such that they remain subordinate to the wider landscaped frontage.



The Heritage Note concludes that, in overall terms, the visual effect of the gates and railings is substantially moderated by the hedge, the retention of the wall and the continuing presence of mature planting. The assessment therefore does not identify a need for wholesale removal of the installation.

Proposed alterations at the pedestrian entrance

Both Hawthorn Design Partnership and Adapt Heritage consider that the overwhelming majority of the railings and gates are appropriate for retention. They have, however, advised that the arrangement around the stone piers at the pedestrian entrance should be modified.

This entrance lies on the left hand side of the frontage when viewed from St Ann's Road. As presently installed, sections of railing extend around and above the gateposts. Adapt Heritage identifies that arrangement as visually awkward because it competes with the stone piers and obscures their established role in defining the entrance.

Drawing 222-E02 shows the proposed correction. The sections extending over and around the gateposts will be removed, the adjoining panels remade, and a simpler fixed gate-style panel provided between the piers to reflect the former pedestrian gate.

The purpose is to reinstate the clear visual reading of the historic pedestrian entrance while maintaining the security of the boundary. The stone piers will again be expressed as distinct features, with the metalwork fitting between them rather than wrapping over them.

The Heritage Note concludes that this alteration would remove the localised adverse effect associated with the existing arrangement.

Policy Considerations

The Development Plan

The relevant development plan framework comprises the saved policies of the Bury Unitary Development Plan and the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, adopted on 21 March 2024. The proposal should be assessed against the relevant provisions of those documents, with the NPPF and the Council's Conservation Area guidance considered as material considerations.

As shown on the extract on the following page from the online Policies Map, the application site falls within the primarily residential area and the St. Mary's Conservation Area.



The Heritage Note identifies UDP Policies EN2, EN2/1 and EN2/2 as relevant to the protection of the Borough's built heritage and the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The Council's published Conservation Area guidance also identifies these policies.

The proposal responds to those heritage objectives through the retention of the features which contribute positively to Westholme's frontage: the masonry wall, stone entrance piers, established hedge and mature vegetation. The proposed alteration at the pedestrian entrance will resolve the specific localised concern identified by the Applicant's heritage adviser.

The relevant assessment is of the installation as proposed to be amended. On that basis, we suggest that the development will preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and cause no harm to its significance.

Places for Everyone policy Policy JP-P2 'Heritage' seeks to conserve, sustain and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings. It requires proposals affecting heritage assets to be considered having regard to national planning policy and informed, where necessary, by an appropriate heritage assessment. The submitted Heritage Note responds to that requirement, identifying the significance of the St Mary's Conservation Area, Westholme's contribution to it, and the effects of the boundary treatment. Its findings have informed the proposed alterations, ensuring that the established wall, stone entrance piers, hedge and mature landscaped setting are conserved.

The proposed amendment at the pedestrian entrance will remove the identified localised adverse effect and restore a clearer relationship between the metalwork and the stone piers.



Elsewhere, the railings and gates will remain visually permeable and substantially screened by planting, maintaining the landscaped residential character of the frontage.

The proposal therefore combines the conservation of established heritage features with a proportionate response to the family's legitimate security needs, consistent with the policy's objectives for environmental quality and social wellbeing. Having regard to the Heritage Note's conclusion that the amended development will preserve the Conservation Area's character and appearance and cause no harm to its significance, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy JP-P2.

Places for Everyone Policy JP-P1 'Sustainable Places' promotes development which responds to local character and creates safe, functional and attractive places. Part 8 specifically seeks to design out crime and terrorism and reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour. The railings and gates respond directly to that objective by controlling access to our clients' property following repeated instances of trespass and associated concerns for their family's safety. Those concerns are reinforced by the wider context of well publicised antisemitic incidents described earlier. The installation provides a proportionate domestic security measure which deters unauthorised access while maintaining a visually open boundary.

The proposal also responds positively to Part 16, particularly the clear distinction between public and private spaces and the integration of landscaping. The established wall, hedge and mature vegetation remain fundamental to the frontage, substantially screening the railings and softening their appearance. The proposed alterations at the pedestrian entrance will improve the relationship between the metalwork and the stone piers, ensuring that the security treatment respects these established features. Taken together, the retained installation and targeted amendments reconcile the policy's safety objectives with the protection of local character and landscape quality, and are therefore considered consistent with Policy JP-P1.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the relevant provisions of the development plan. It retains the established boundary features and landscaped character of Westholme, incorporates targeted alterations which address the identified localised heritage concern, and provides proportionate security measures responding to the family's needs. The amended development will preserve the character and appearance of the St Mary's Conservation Area, while supporting the safety and design objectives of Places for Everyone, and is therefore considered consistent with the relevant saved UDP policies and Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of Places for Everyone.

National Planning Policy Framework (revised August 2026)

The revised NPPF provides the national policy framework for assessing the proposal. As explained in the Heritage Note, Policy HE4 requires conservation appropriate to the significance of affected heritage assets, while Policy HE5 requires a proportionate assessment of significance and the effects of development. Policy HE6 gives substantial weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Policy HE9 specifically addresses Conservation



Areas and the retention and conservation of features which contribute positively to their character or appearance.

The submitted Heritage Note provides a proportionate assessment of the relevant asset, Westholme's contribution and the effects of the proposed boundary treatment. It distinguishes between the railings and vehicular gates that can appropriately remain and the pedestrian entrance arrangement requiring alteration.

The proposal reflects that assessment. It conserves the established wall, piers, hedge and landscaped setting, while removing the identified localised adverse effect. Adapt Heritage's overall conclusion is that the development, as amended, would cause no harm to the significance of the St Mary's Conservation Area and would preserve its character and appearance.

NPPF Policy P5 'Maintaining public safety and security', particularly Part 1(a), supports proportionate design measures to address risks to occupiers and recognises vulnerability to crime and the fear of crime. We do not wish to overstate the position or suggest that our clients face a specific, identified threat. Nevertheless, their experience of repeated trespass, concerns for their children's safety and understandable anxiety arising from antisemitic incidents in the wider area give rise to a legitimate concern which merits due consideration. The railings and gates provide a proportionate means of controlling access and offering reassurance, while their open design, substantial landscape screening and proposed alterations respect the character of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore considered consistent with Policy P5's approach to addressing safety and security through appropriate design.

Overall Conclusions

Our clients have responded constructively to the Council's Enforcement correspondence by obtaining specialist architectural and heritage advice and incorporating targeted alterations into this application. The proposal seeks to retain a proportionate security boundary while correcting the arrangement around the former pedestrian entrance, where the existing metalwork detracts from the stone gateposts.

The established masonry wall, entrance piers, hedge and mature landscaping will remain. The railings are substantially screened along much of the frontage, while their open form and the visually permeable gates allow the landscaped setting to remain appreciable.

The proposed alterations will restore a clearer relationship between the metalwork and the pedestrian entrance piers. Adapt Heritage concludes that the development, as amended, will preserve the character and appearance of the St Mary's Conservation Area and cause no harm to its significance. Our clients are willing to undertake the proposed alterations within a reasonable period to be agreed with the LPA.

The installation also addresses legitimate concerns about trespass and family safety. Without overstating the circumstances, our clients' fear of crime deserves consideration, and the



proposed treatment provides a measured response which reconciles domestic security with the conservation of established boundary features.

For the reasons set out above, the proposal is considered consistent with the relevant saved policies of the Bury UDP, Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of Places for Everyone, and the heritage and safety objectives of the revised NPPF. The submitted evidence supports retention with the proposed amendments, rather than wholesale removal of the installation.

We therefore respectfully request 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard Gee", positioned below the typed name.

Richard Gee
Director



Annex A

Photographs of neighbouring and local boundary treatments within Conservation Area

































