



Greenspace Design & Consultancy UK
Landscape Report

Old Market Street/Grant Close
Manchester
M9 8DX

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1 Introduction

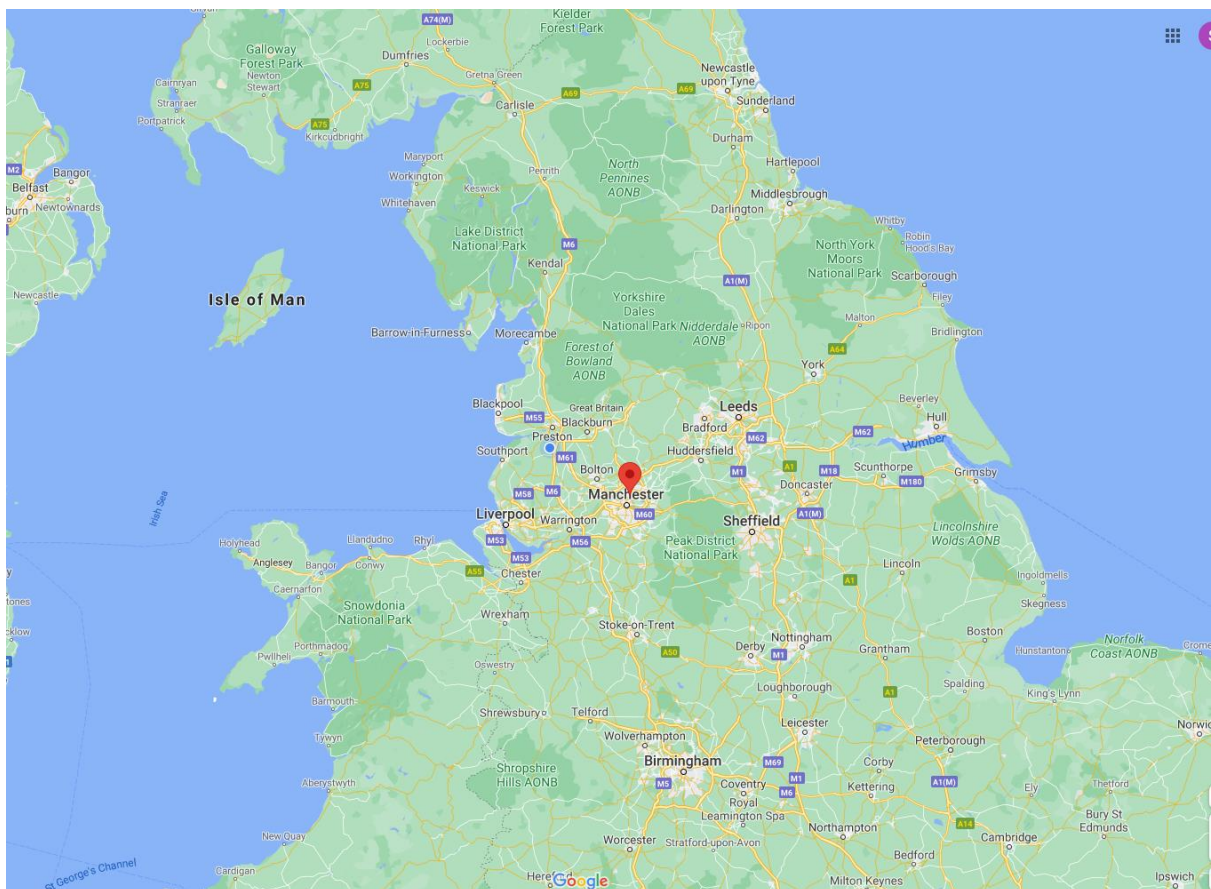
The purpose of this report is to record and analyse existing features of the site at Old Market Street/Grant Close in order to create proposals for landscape development and to enhance the aesthetical and functional aspects of the site

2 Survey Methods

A desktop study of the site was carried out to determine key features/factors which are analysed and recorded as follows

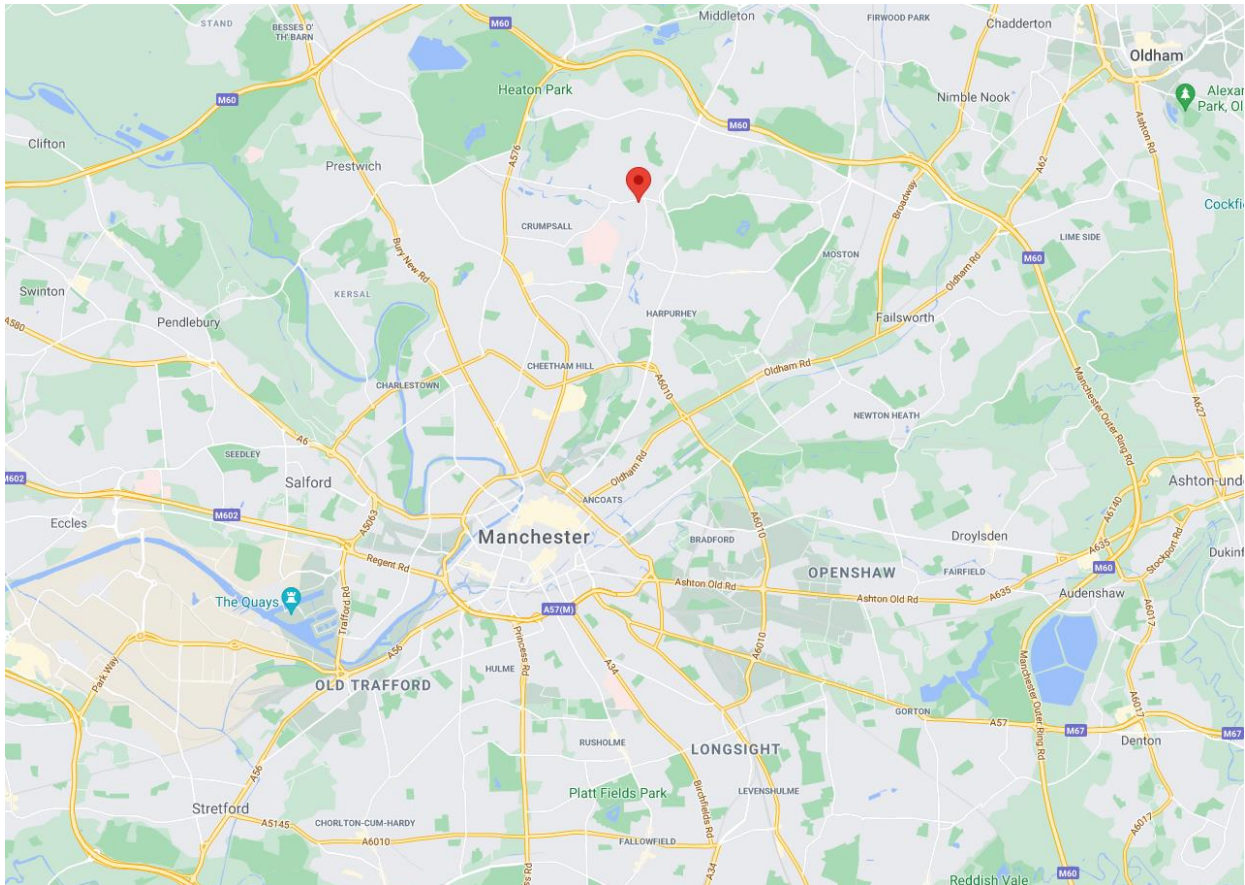
3 Location

The site is situated in the area of Blackley, approximately 4.5 miles north of Manchester city centre in the Northwest of England; and is within the district of Manchester City Council



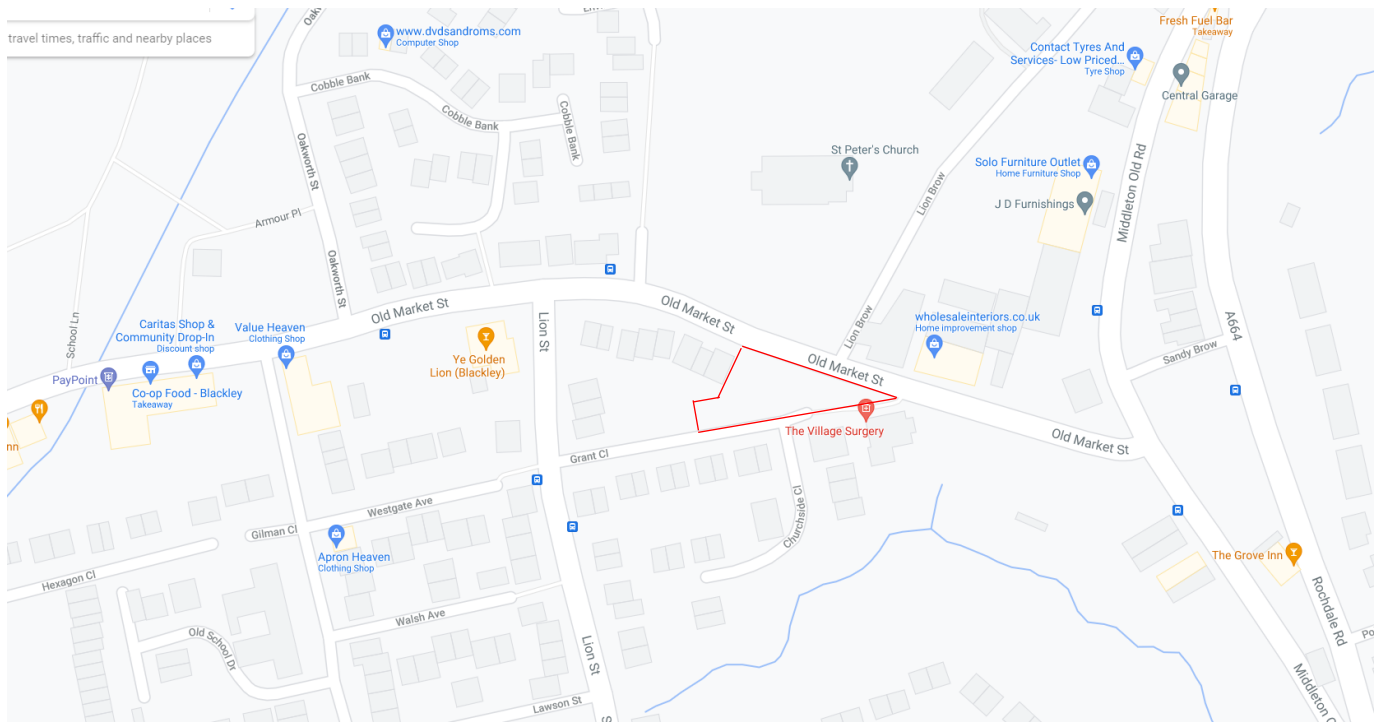
Location of site in England

(www.google.com/maps)



Location of site in Manchester

(www.google.com/maps)



Location of site within the local area

(www.google.com/maps)

4. Current Use

The site is currently open ground that has lacked maintenance, and therefore appears untidy and poor in appearance. An abundance of self-seeded plants are apparent but do not appear to be of any species deemed of ecological appearance. However, it must be noted that this author has not carried out a detailed plant survey and if required an ecological survey should be carried out by a qualified ecologist.

Rough unmown grass is present which again creates a visual appearance of neglect and poor aesthetic value. Older images show some trees were present on site although these have now been felled.

Some sections of the site are used for community parking although there is no official parking designation that could be identified for the purpose of this report. The boundary footpaths and parking areas are in poor condition with crumbling tarmac that has been patched numerous times and is interspersed with self-seeded weeds

Whilst it has not been confirmed it is imagined that the site is currently used by the local community as a cut through between Old Market Street and Grant Close, and an area where dog fouling and littering may be prevalent

5. Boundaries

a. North

The north boundary is defined by Old Market Street which runs along the north side of the site, with a footpath on the immediate northern boundary. Old Market Street links the A576 and the A664 leading to/from Manchester city centre and surrounding areas, as well as to/from the M60 and motorway network.

Opposite the site on the other side of Old Market Street is St Peters Church which is a grade II* listed building built in the mid 1800's, on a site that dates back to the 1500's. The church grounds are deemed a Priority Habitat, no doubt for the fact they are undisturbed by any development or high footfall. The church grounds sit higher than Old Market Street and a stone retaining wall along the boundary adds character to the area. There are some mature trees in the church grounds, including a particularly nice specimen of a Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*) directly opposite the site

Properties and character changes quite significantly in a short distance when travelling east or west along Old Market Street from slightly run down urban in need of regeneration and commercial to newer residential development.



Old Market Street looking west, with St Peters Church to the right and the site to the left

(www.google.com/maps)

b. South

To the south of the site lies Grant Close, a residential street which has been closed to the east side by the use of bollards. Along Grant Close are residential properties that appear to be fairly new in construction and are of neat and well maintained appearance.

These properties view directly onto the site, which due to the sloping levels will have clear views into some of the site following development, and in particular the eastern side where boundary structures will be lower



Grant Close looking west, with the southeast edge of the site to the right

(www.google.com/maps)

c. East

The east of the site is formed by the meeting of Old Market Street with the footpath from Grant Close forming a point. There is a doctors surgery located to the eastern most point although this is a distance from the site with footpaths and a section of grass dividing the two. There are no boundary structures on the eastern side of the site with the area open to the public



Eastern boundary (viewed looking west)

(www.google.com/maps)

d. West

To the west is a residential bungalow with a driveway adjacent to the site and dividing boundary fences are in place around some of the bungalow/site. The site continues to run along the rear garden of the bungalow, beyond this is a parking bay used by the neighbouring properties which is located just west to the site boundary

6. Legislation

Research was carried out to determine any protective restrictions such as Public Rights of Way, land classifications etc. It was found that there are no Public Rights of Way or Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) on the site although further research would be required to state this categorically.

The landscape character of the site falls under the category of 'Urban', with an Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation of 'Residential' (www.mappinggm.org.uk 2021) The site is not located within a conservation area, nor has any protection status that could be identified for purpose of this report.

There are a few areas close to the site that have ecological protection including nearby Boggart Hole Clough and Blackley Forest which are designated Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), however there is no indication of a green corridor to the site and the site itself does not fall under this status. It should be noted however that further research by a qualified ecologist would be required to ascertain fully any ecological implications/restrictions

7. History

Blackley was founded by the Romans, and is included in the Domesday book meaning Blackley has a long settlement history. Research suggests that it was a small farming community until the Industrial Revolution when areas like Manchester became large scale industrial centres. Due to the location and urban setting of the site it is very doubtful that any archaeological remains/finds would be present, however, more thorough research by a qualified historian/ archaeologist would be advisable should the need arise during any development

8. Topography

No topographical survey was undertaken for the purposes of the landscape scheme; however it is noted that the site slopes down towards the southern boundary and this is very apparent in the eastern side of the site.

There is some indication of flood risk to the south of Grant Close (www.mappinggm.org.uk 2021) although this does not affect the site. A new drainage system has been incorporated into the development plans to account for water runoff and drainage

9. Existing features

There are no features of any value within the site, nor any features that should be retained as the site appears as unmaintained waste ground

10. Landscape Character Assessment

The area around the site is urban in appearance with residential and commercial buildings of mixed ages and building types, which is typical for a town on the outskirts of a major city where there is more affordable housing and good transport links.

There is a sense of regeneration within the area with the development of new build type housing which are of neat and well maintained appearance, along with some run down buildings mixed in.

St Peters Church offers a more peaceful aspect and is a dominating feature within the area, with the boundary wall and mature trees adding character and interest, as well as a more greenspace open feel.

The proximity of several greenspaces which are of biological importance creates a more rural feel a short distance from the site.

The site itself is very conspicuous from both Old Market Street and Grant Close and currently gives an untidy, unmaintained appearance which is detrimental to the overall impression of the area with no current benefits or aesthetic qualities

11. Visual Impact Assessment

Any improvements to the site must be done in a way that enhances and improves the overall character of the area and add aesthetic value. Due to the location of the site and the proximity of neighbouring properties the landscape scheme must aim to improve on the greenspace rather than replace it with hard landscaping, although it must be remembered that it is to be a private garden and the homeowners will want to utilise their space for relaxation and enjoyment and maintain a degree of privacy.

Boundaries along the eastern side of the site where there is the footpath and road must be kept low and well maintained in line with *The Highways Act 1980* and all trees must be well maintained to ensure safety to vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Considering the current neglected state of the site creating a neat, well maintained scheme will ensure the continued improvement of the area and will support the community's pride in its neighbourhood which has been proven to reduce vandalism, dog fouling and littering

12. Landscape Proposals

The landscape proposals aim to enable the new property to sit comfortably within the surrounding area and enhance the aesthetic properties of the site

a. Trees

Trees have been incorporated into the scheme to replace those previously felled and to create more interest. Native species have been chosen as there is a predominance of these in close proximity. *Betula pendula* and *Prunus avium* are both species which offer good ecological benefits for birds and insects as well as providing seasonal interest. *Betula pendula* has an open growing habit which will ensure there is minimum overhang onto the footpath and road and can be easily pruned if/when necessary.

Magnolia stellata has been included to add some interest close to the house where space is limited, this has been underplanted with *Bergenia* 'Silberlicht' to provide good ground cover

As the trees are planted into the lawn it is recommended that there is a turf free circle around the tree stem of approximately 200mm to prevent damage to tree when mowing

The Highways Act 1980 must be adhered to in regards to all tree maintenance and care.

b. Turf

Turf has been proposed for the majority of the free space, the purpose of this is to allow for a green feel to the site and to enable better drainage. As the property is not yet constructed the client has not yet identified their needs/requirements it is better to create a neat, easily maintained landscape that can be adapted in the future if desired.

For easier maintenance it is recommended that turf is not laid flush to walls, fences etc, and that an edging material such as setts or timber can be used if preferred

c. Paving

Around the property is paving, this allows for functional use such as recreational and parking. To enable a unified look one type of paving has been suggested,

Marshall's Drivesett Tegula has a natural feel and will fit in well within the local area; and can be used for both driveway and patio,

There is also the option of using permeable paving for the parking area which will reduce water run-off and contribute towards sustainability but client preferences and budget must be considered as this is a more costly type of paving.

Whatever the choice of paving it is recommended that softer tones of browns, reds and golds are used to blend in more with the surrounding area and a smoother type of paving stone will be more functional for a patio/recreational area

d. Hedge

Taxus baccata (Yew) has been proposed for the hedge on the eastern boundary of the site. This has been chosen as it will provide a dense evergreen hedge which can be neatly maintained and will sit nicely within the local area, and in particular St Peters Church as Yew trees are prevalent within church grounds. Whilst minimal due to the fact it will be pruned regularly there are some ecological benefits with Yew

It has been recommended that the hedge is maintained to a height of 1 meter due to its proximity to the footpath and road. The Highways Act 1980 must be adhered to in relation to maintenance and care

e. Wildflowers

A Wildflower mix has been recommended for the eastern edge of the site; due to the shape of the site it was deemed impractical to turf into a point so wildflowers will create interest and some ecological benefit (admittedly minimal).

Wildflower seeds must be purchased from a reliable source and be native to the area. Mix species to be determined by client and supplier.

13. Conclusion

The landscape proposals will ensure the development will improve the aesthetic views in the area and take what is currently a neglected area of rough grass, poor quality tarmacadam and weeds and benefit the local community.

Having a well maintained greenspace with native trees will enable the site to unify the character of St Peters Church with the newer property developments on Grant Close, and improve the sense of pride and well-being for the local residents

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