

CV PLANNING

**PROPOSED GARDEN CENTRE, LAND AT ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, BURNAGE
SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT**

ON BEHALF OF BUD GARDEN CENTRE LIMITED

MARCH 2023

INTRODUCTION

This summary Supporting Planning Statement (SPS) has been prepared on behalf of Bud Garden Centre (BGC) in conjunction with the submission of a full planning application including change of use for a garden centre on land at St Margaret's Church, Burnage, Manchester. This planning application is submitted to facilitate the relocation of a long standing small local business which is extremely important to Levenshulme, Burnage and the surrounding community area. Such is the importance of BGC to the local area that it was formally designated as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) on 28th November 2022.

SITE LOCATION AND PLANNING HISTORY

The planning application site occupies land immediately fronting Burnage Lane and forms a broadly rectangular shape being bound to the north and east by existing railings and to the south by the boundary of 250 Burnage Lane. The site occupies land in the ownership of the adjoining St Margaret's Church and community centre and currently comprises of a mix of previously developed land and hard standing, an existing shipping container used for storage which is proposed to be retained and a grassed area. There are several trees to the northern and eastern site boundaries and some limited removals and pruning works are proposed as set out in the enclosed Tree survey and Method statement prepare by Lally Tree Management.



Figure 1: The site viewed from Burnage Lane.

In terms of the local context, it is predominantly suburban residential in nature with more traditional housing stock located further to the west and east of Burnage Lane however to the immediate north is Dahlia House, a modern social rented extra care flatted development operated by Southway Housing Trust. This residential building, which is part four story, frames the planning application site when viewed from Burnage Lane alongside 250 Burnage Lane which is a late 20th century 2.5 storey detached dwelling.

Access to the site is available immediately via the adjoining access road. Located to the west of the application site is a further area of landscaping, to the south of which is St Margaret's Church

and the associated more modern church hall. Immediately to the north of the hall there are approximately 50 surface level car parking spaces. Pedestrian and cycle access is freely available to the site via the existing access to Burnage Lane.



Figure 2: Hardstanding and existing storage container on the site.



Figure 3: Relationship of site to Dahlia House (right) and 250 Burnage Lane (left). Main site access shown on right of photo.

A planning history search undertaken on the Council's website indicates that there are no planning applications directly relevant to the application site. There have been several applications related to the construction of the new church hall in 2003 and other permissions related to tree works and the church itself however none of these are directly applicable to this planning application.

NATURE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & KEY BENEFITS

The proposed description of development is as follows:

"Full planning permission including change of use to garden centre including display of horticultural products and retail sales to visiting members of the public (Use Class E a)) including:

- *Relocation and retention of existing storage container;*
- *Erection of horticultural structures including polytunnel, open fronted timber barn and other storage sheds;*
- *Open storage of plants, trees/shrubs, and associated products;*
- *Internal landscaping arrangements;*
- *Erection of new secure boundary treatments; and*
- *Creation of new pedestrian access point and gates."*

The planning application is made on behalf of BGC, a local business established over 12 years ago. BGC currently operate from a local site at Omer Drive located to the east of the A34 Kingsway also within Burnage. As noted above BGC is an extremely popular and valuable resource for local people providing access to plants, shrubs, trees, seeds, and bulbs from a trusted local company in addition to expert growing advice.

It is proposed that the application site would be utilised in a very similar manner to the current operation which is to be open for visiting members of the public to browse products and for the sales of plants, shrubs, trees etc in addition to sustainable compost.

In line with the submitted drawings there are some limited tree works which would need to be undertaken to accommodate the proposals however most of the works are for the management of existing trees (all trees in the site are categorised as retention category B2 or lower). Impacts have been minimised and the siting and layout of the garden centre has been amended to ensure that the approach is as sensitive as possible. No permanent building foundations are proposed and the structures to be erected will use suitable ground fixings (specialist tree screws) to avoid any potential negative impacts in line with the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement.

Actual tree losses are restricted to a group (G9) of low arboricultural value (category C2) self-seeded ash and willow along the existing southern boundary fence. These need to be removed to allow the installation of new fencing. Appendix 1 of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment confirms no other losses are proposed. Compensatory tree planting to account for the limited losses is recommended and it is proposed that the details of this mitigation can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

To ensure that the site is safe and secure it is also proposed to erect new boundary fencing which will be suitable to the character of the area and adjoining development (proposed 358 type). This does however need to be of a minimum height of 2.4 metres for security purposes and to ensure that the premises are protected from potential theft or overnight break in etc.

Within the site a limited number of structures are proposed including an open fronted timber horticultural barn in addition to a storage shed and a traditional polytunnel structure. Submitted with the application is a site layout which shows how the internal walkway (comprising permeable eco grid) and products for sale will be arranged around these structures. Access would be through a new pedestrian gate on the northern boundary with a separate additional double gate access provided with lockable gates to receive deliveries.

With regards to servicing and car parking it is expected that there will be one weekly delivery of plants and compost which would be made on a medium sized lorry. The delivery vehicle would enter from Burnage Lane and then be able to turn in the church car park before unloading the goods and departing. This is an exceptionally low volume of service traffic and would be arranged to avoid peak times or the use of the church for services and any other regular functions.



Figure 4: Existing vehicular access to Church with northern site boundary on left.

In line with the existing BGC site at Omer Drive it is expected that the vast majority of customers will travel on foot or by cycle however the circa 50 car parking spaces adjoining the application site provides more than ample parking for the proposed development. Based on the current business operation, at the absolute peak trading period between April-June it is expected that as a 'worst case' up to 30 customers may arrive on a Saturday or Sunday with it being significantly quieter outside weekends. In summary the car parking provision will be ample to serve the development and no conflicts are expected to arise with the operation of St Margaret's Church. BGC will be in continuing contact with the Church if any unforeseen issues do arise in relation to car parking.

In respect of waste generation, all organic material is to be composted on site whilst any plastics are taken back by suppliers. The site therefore will not generate any appreciable waste and there is no requirement therefore for refuse or recycling vehicles to access the site.

With regards to the operation of the site the core trading days are Wednesday-Sunday with the garden centre being open by 10 AM and closing for business at 5:00 PM. Additional flexibility for

opening hours is sought as part of this planning application to operate the site from 9 AM to 6:00 PM seven days a week in order to retain some flexibility for the business into the future. This is judged be acceptable in planning terms as it is a low intensity use, does not give rise to noise or disturbance nor any other amenity conflicts.

In summary the proposals will secure several key benefits including:

- The retention of a longstanding and highly valued local business in the area on an appropriate site for this specific type of business;
- Maintaining employment (currently 4 jobs) with the ability for the business to grow further in this new location which offers operational advantages compared to the Omer Drive site;
- Providing additional space for the business to grow in comparison to the existing location which for example does not provide any dedicated car parking spaces;
- Retaining a beneficial low impact use in the area which provides strong community, social and health benefits including access to gardening advice and information which in turn encourages more healthy and active lifestyles including benefits to mental health; and
- BGC has been designated as an Asset of Community Value and has strong links to the local community, Levenshulme market, local schools and its retention within the local area is a significant material planning consideration in favour of the application proposals.

KEY PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The key policies of relevance to this proposal are those in the adopted Manchester Core Strategy (July 2012) in addition to the National Planning Policy Framework and in particular the principle in favour of sustainable development.

The planning application site is not subject to any specific designations in the Core Strategy Proposals Map other than being located within the South Manchester spatial area and therefore policy EC9 applies. The proposed development would be complementary to policy EC9 which is primarily concerned with ensuring that South Manchester remains an area containing neighbourhoods of choice. It is clear given BGC's value to the local community that the relocation and retention of this business would be fully in line with the spatial objectives of the Core Strategy.

Policy DM1 Development Management is also relevant to determining the proposals. It is concluded that the proposals comply fully with this policy as:

- The development is appropriately sited and of an acceptable layout and scale using materials appropriate to this use and the area;
- There will be no appreciable impact on the surrounding area in terms of design, scale, or the appearance of the proposed development. It would also be in keeping with the

character of the area including the mix of residential, commercial and community uses find along Burnage Lane and arguably tidy up the existing roadside frontage.

- The development will not give rise to unacceptable effects on amenity.
- The proposed use is in a highly accessible and sustainable location within walking distance of a large residential population and will reduce the need to travel by car. The site is also accessible by public transport with bus stops located on Burnage Lane.
- The development has been designed with community safety and crime prevention in mind and will not give rise to any appreciable impacts in this respect.
- The development will provide appropriate internal storage and can be serviced without any issues of highway safety arising.
- With regards to car parking there are ample spaces provided immediately adjoining the site and the existing access is both safe and appropriate.
- The development will not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on biodiversity, landscape, archaeology or built heritage.
- There are no flood risk or drainage constraints. It is not necessary, nor is it proposed to connect the site to the existing drainage network either for surface water or foul flows.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT & CONCLUSIONS

This SPS has shown that the proposals represent sustainable development and that the application site is highly accessible to the local community who would be the primary users of the garden centre. It has been demonstrated that the use is low impact and appropriate to the local area and indeed the planning application site can be considered to represent the optimal relocation site for BGC bearing in mind its proximity to a significant resident population within walking and cycling distance, many of whom form the core of the customer base. An alternative location outside of the area would not therefore be appropriate.

The site can be adequately serviced, and sufficient car parking is available immediately adjoining. The use will give rise to no appreciable impacts upon residential amenity, does not result in planning policy conflicts nor does the use generate any identifiable planning harm. It is therefore a proposal which is fully compliant with the policies of the Development Plan.

This statement has also identified several important material considerations in favour of the proposals including the retention of a key local business of great importance to the community and a designated Asset of Community Value. On this basis it is evident that the proposals represent sustainable development and should therefore be approved 'without delay' consistent with paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.