

Area 14 – Withington and Burnage

AREA POLICIES

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WB2 In considering proposals for the expansion and/or redevelopment of major employment sites in the area, particularly the Christie Hospital on Wilmslow Road, the Council will have regard to the need to minimise any impact upon the environmental quality and character of the area, residential amenity, and traffic movements.

Reason: The major employer in the Withington and Burnage area is the Christie Hospital on Wilmslow Road, Withington, which provides an important regional and national medical facility. It already generates a considerable amount of traffic and the lack of adequate off-street car parking facilities to cater for this traffic is becoming a problem locally.

WB3 In the Withington area, business use developments (as defined in Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987) will normally be allowed only in or adjacent to major shopping and commercial centres, existing industrial and office areas, and other existing areas of commercial activity along or near to radial roads. In addition, the Council will normally permit proposals for the conversion and extension for Larger buildings of character occupying a major road frontage which are vacant and where the proposals represent the only realistic opportunity to enable the building to achieve a continuing useful life and thus continue to contribute to the local environment.

Reason: There was a considerable amount of new office and light industrial development in Withington during the later part of the 1980s, but relatively few examples of such development took place in the inner urban areas of the City. Part 1 policy 11.6 seeks to channel business use developments to these areas. In order to further this objective the Council wishes to discourage further significant business developments in the Withington area. With regard to sites along or near to radial roads, the phrase "existing areas of commercial activity" refers to a recognizable commercial area and not simply to the presence in the vicinity of one or two buildings in nonresidential use. Withington contains a high number of large buildings of character which form an important part of the Victorian and Edwardian character of the area. It may not always be possible for a residential use to be found for such buildings and, on main road frontages, conversion to business use may be preferable to demolition. As an exception to the thrust to the policy, therefore, such cases will require careful consideration on their merits.

SHOPPING

WB6 Further conversion of retail and commercial properties to Class A3 (food and drink) uses will not normally be permitted along Wilmslow Road within Withington Village.

Reason: Approximately one quarter of the properties along this stretch of Wilmslow Road are in Class A3 use and a number of others already have planning consent to change their use to Class A3. The approval of further Class A3 establishments would conflict with approved traffic management proposals for Wilmslow Road which will involve pavement widenings, single lanes in either direction and 24 hour per day waiting restrictions. Food and drink uses attract a significant proportion of passing trade and additional activity of this nature would encourage levels of short-stay kerbside parking which would disrupt the free flow of traffic and thereby pose problems of highway and pedestrian safety. The cumulative visual effect of these uses, which often require shopfront designs and signs unsympathetic to the properties and incongruous features such as external flue pipes, together with the litter generated, detract from the character of the Withington Conservation Area which is centred upon the shopping centre. The approval of further food and drink uses would also erode the retail character of these important frontages within the shopping centre and would thereby affect the local shopping role of Withington Village. Any further increase in the number of Class A3 uses

along Wilmslow Road would exacerbate the inter-related problems identified above and thereby conflict with the aim of improving the appearance and role of the Village.

LEISURE AND RECREATION

WB9 The Council will develop landscaped footpaths and cycleways along the former Fallowfield (Old Trafford/Gorton) railway line and the former Midland railway line which run along the northern and southern boundary of the Withington and Burnage area. In the latter case the proposal will be pursued as a temporary treatment pending the construction of Metrolink along this line. The Council will endeavour to retain the footpaths and cycleways in some form when Metrolink is built.

Reason: The Council wishes to extend where possible the network of linear open spaces for informal recreation.

WB10 The Council will widen the range of activities on areas of open space in order to meet local recreational needs in Withington and Burnage. Cringle Fields and the Ripplingham Road Recreation Area require special attention under this policy.

Reason: Withington and Burnage is well served with recreational areas and playing fields. There is however, scope to further develop their potential. In carrying out this policy, the Council will seek to enhance the existing character of all open spaces in Withington and Burnage.

TRANSPORT

WB11 The Council will manage the flow of traffic along Wilmslow Road with the aim of improving operating conditions for road users and pedestrians.

Reason: The nature of measures to achieve this objective will require further detailed investigation. An important additional aim of this policy is to attract more people to use bus services.