Design and Access Statement



Proposed New Mosque building to replace existing mosque at 79 Heywood Street, Manchester.

This document has been prepared to support the planning application to erect a new mosque building to replace the existing mosque building on site at 79 Heywood Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

May 2012

Site Location and Context

The proposal site is located in the Cheetham Hill area of North Manchester. The site is a rectangular shaped plot, measuring approximately 1,250 square metres. The long boundary to the site runs from North to South, and the short boundary running East to West. The site is bounded by public road to 3 sides; the east boundary run Heywood Street; to the North boundary runs Brunswick Drive and to the South boundary runs Barnsdale Drive. To the West of the site there are residential units, these are 2 storey with a pitched roof.

The proposal site sits in a predominantly residential area, however across the road on Heywood Street, there are some commercial uses as well. The block of properties directly facing the proposal site all have commercial uses on the ground floor, uses ranging from A1 to A5; the first floor is residential, either used by the business owners or let independently from the business on the ground floor.

To the North East of the proposal site, across Heywood Street, there is a large portal frame commercial unit, which is being used a Manchester Cash and Carry, this is a large green grocers. The building has facing brickwork to 3 metres from ground and the further 2 metres of metal cladding, the roof of this building is also metal; the building, to its apex is approximately 6.5 metres high.

To the north of Manchester Cash & carry, across Wordsworth Avenue, there is another large commercial unit. It is not clear what this commercial unit is used for, as it has not active frontage to Heywood Street, and the doors and windows facing Wordsworth Avenue, have their shutters closed during all times. Although this building is also portal frame, this is completely clad in facing brickwork to all sides; the roof is finished in a insulated metal sytem. The building is 2 storeys high to the eaves, and the ridge finishes at a 3 storey height above the external ground level.

To the south of the proposal site, across Barnsdale Drive, there is a Presbyterian Church. This is a brick built building which is part single storey and part 2 storey; the single storey element has a flat roof and the two storey part has a pitched roof, which is finished in concrete tiles.

Across from the church, toward East, there is a vacant plot of land, which may have belonged to the primary school, which adjoins the vacant land. It is conceivable that the school land was disposed to developers, however due to the economic climate no development has taken place on this land.

The proposal site is a short 5 minutes walk away from Cheetham Hill Road (A665) and Queens Road (A6010), both these routes have good public transport services running along them. In particular Cheetham Hill Road, is a major arterial route into Manchester city centre. The proposal site is also a shirt walk away from 'Manchester Fort' which is a very popular retail park.

Site Features

There is a fall of approximately 600mm from East to West; and a fall of 90mm from North to South, over the proposal site. The public footpath which runs along the East boundary of the site, is 3.7 metres wide, there are some trees along this footpath, on the council land, which will provide a visual amenity once they have matured. Outside the pedestrian entrance gates to the main entrance, there is a large open area of public footpath.

The existing mosque building is part single storey and part two storey; the single storey element has a flat roof, and the 2 storey part of the building has a pitched roof, with concrete roof tiles. The building is all red brick, barring the first area above the single storey element, which is rendered, in a colour to match the brickwork.

The existing mosque building on the proposal site consist of two buildings, a two storey building with a pitched roof, tiled in concrete roof tiles; this part of the mosque sits to the North-West part of the site, and serves as an entrance to the mosque, accommodating and toilet ablution facilities. On the first floor there is a small prayer hall and a library.

The boundary treatment to the site is currently 2 metre high galvanised steel fence, which runs around the entire perimeter of the site; the vehicular and pedestrian gates are also in the same material and design.

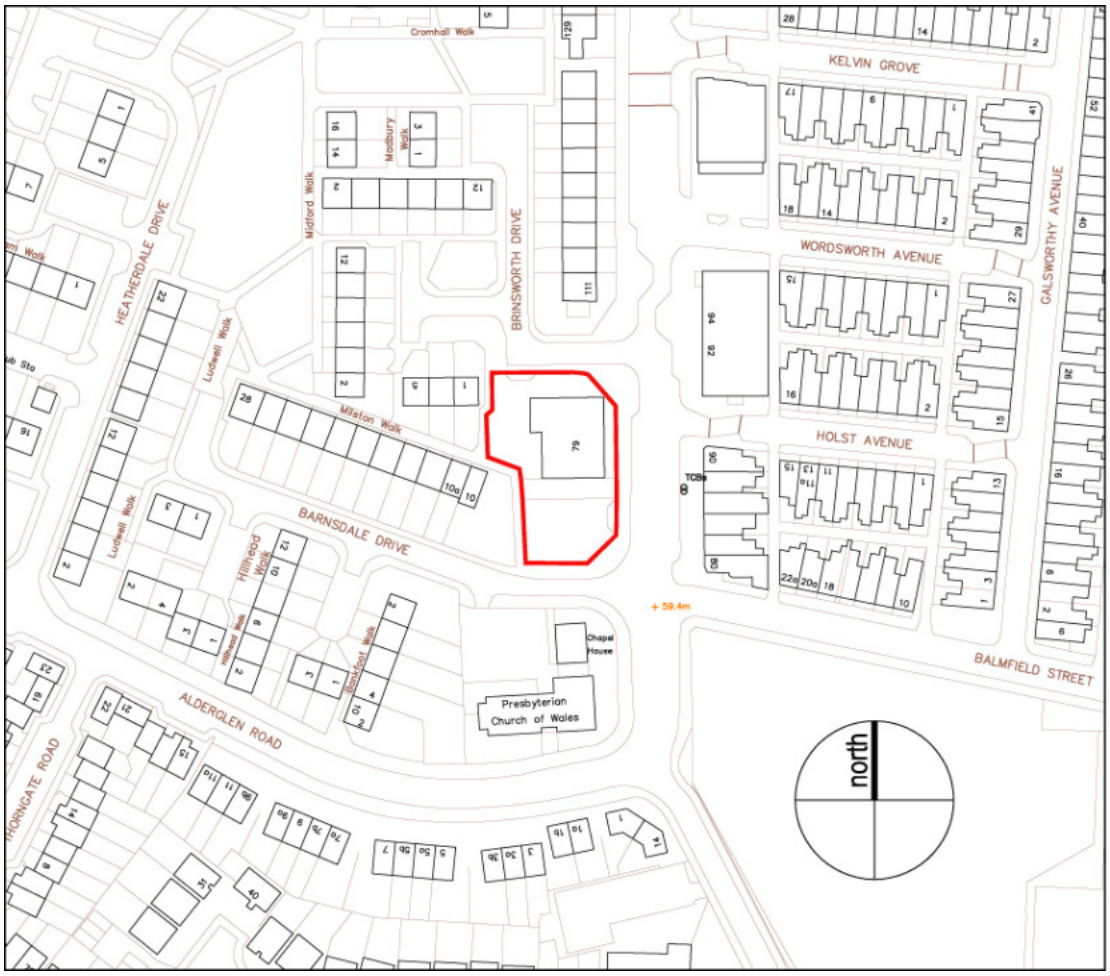
Vehicular access to the site is via Heywood Street, at the Southern end of the proposal site. There is a dropped kerb to the public footpath at this point, allowing easy access. The car park area is not marked but can currently accommodate around 14 cars, and a further 6 if double parked. There are currently no allocated disable bays and so provision for bicycle storage.

There is also a makeshift entrance lobby, this is temporary, as can be seen by the way it has been constructed, this was erected to create some additional capacity during busy congregational prayers.

About Al Falah Islamic Centre

Al Falah Islamic Centre is a registered charity, which is run by local volunteers and funding by donations from the local community. The centre for the most part provides a prayer hall for the local Muslim community, for their 5 obligatory daily prayers. During evenings and weekends, the centre also provides a facility for teaching Islamic studies including Quran classes, for children.

Due to the constraints of the existing premises, there is no facility for female member of the local community to perform their prayers in congregation. Also the facility does not have space to allow for other acitivities such as parent toddler group and other activities which would be aimed at not just the Muslim community but the wider community.



Site Location Plan



Photo showing the commercial properties across the road from the proposal site.



Photo showing Manchester cash & carry, commercial unit across from the proposal site.



Photo showing large 3 storey commercial unit across the road from Manchester cash & carry.



Photo showing the existing mosque building, the makeshift entrance lobby and the vehicular access to the site from Heywood Street.



Photo showing the North-East corner of the existing mosque building.

Site Demographics

The local populations around the proposal site are predominantly Muslims, originating originally from the Indian Sub-continent. The local Muslim community has been settled in this area of Manchester for the last 3 to 4 generations.

Context Architecture

The prevalent aspect of the buildings around the proposal site is the red facing brickwork. Aside from the brickwork finish, the design of the building around the site varies greatly. The buildings, being of a very utilitarian design, with little or no architectural consideration; the residential buildings, ranging from apartment buildings to detached houses, again are not what would be considered of architectural value. Some of the newer housing developments and apartment buildings have introduced elements of render, to break up large expanses of red brickwork, which does work well. We do not feel that there is any building within the context of the proposal site which can inform the architectural language of the proposed new Mosque building.

Previous Planning Approval

A planning application for the extension to the existing mosque, which engulfs the existing building in its entirety, effectively creating a new Mosque, was approved on 22 December 2010. The building footprint approved, was essentially the footprint of the new Mosque building we are seeking with this application.

Works relating to the approved application had started on site, however due to certain site constraints and a re-assessment of the planning approved facility, the members of the mosque committee decided that a purpose built, new build project would deliver the requirements of the local community at the same cost as the proposed extension.

Development Proposals

During the past year the mosque committee has considered the extension plans for the Mosque, and undertaken cost feasibility studies to ascertain the benefits of demolishing the existing building and replacing it with a new building which would sit on the same footprint as the planning approved scheme.

The mosque committee decided by building a completely new building, as opposed to extending the existing building; this would give them a more open plan and efficient layout within the same gross internal area; eliminating awkward shaped spaces and difficult junctions between the old and new. It was concluded for the same cost as the extension, the mosque committee

could construct a new building that not only meets their current requirements but also future needs.

As with the approved extension proposals, the new Mosque will not sit directly on the site boundary, we have left at least 600mm from the boundary to Heywood Street. The proposed new building covers approximately the same footprint as the approved extension scheme, and the height of the building, including the minaret are within, or smaller, than the approved extension proposals.

Social & Economic Context

The Mosque and the Community Centre already serve the local community and there is a clear and urgent need within the local population to improve the existing facilities. The redevelopment doe not only meet the current requirements of the local community, but also take into account the future needs of the local community.

The revised plans also provide better and improved facilities for female worshipers attending the Mosque, by improved ablution areas, better access to their prayer hall, additional community rooms for activities such as 'mother and toddler' groups.

Many of the facilities within the Mosque, and in particular, the Community orientated facilities, are open to the wider local community. Indeed the local Muslim community welcomes the involvement of the wider local community for the benefit of integration and better understanding of each others cultural and religious beliefs.

The proposed redevelopment of the site will help Al Falah Islamic Centre to further improve and enhance the good work and services that it currently offers to the local community. We believe this will not only benefit individuals, but will also benefit the local service providers, not least, the local council, health service and the police service. The development will also contribute to the Principle of Inclusive Society and Equal Opportunities for all members of the local community regardless of their race, colour or religious beliefs.

Planning Policy

The current use of the proposal site will not be changed; the proposals do not seek to make any changes to the services currently provided from the site. Furthermore the proposals are in line with the extant planning permission; the new application in principle seeks permission for a 'new build' scheme instead of the extension scheme currently approved.

D1.1 – General Design Criteria.

We believe the proposed design for the new building is contemporary and reflects modern forward looking Muslim community. The design of the proposed building will be discussed in detail further in this document.

CF1.2 – New and Improved Community and Education Facilities.

The proposed new building will provide a purpose built prayer hall, education facility, for both religious and secular teaching and a community hall facility for the wider local community.

We can also demonstrate that the geographical location of the proposal site is ideal, as it would sit right in the centre of the community for which it is intended. There are good public transport links from Cheetham Hill Road; furthermore we are providing bicycle stands to encourage people who live within cycling distance to use their bikes. The bulk of the congregation live within walking distance to the proposed new mosque, and they will be encouraged to walk to the building for their daily prayer.

In line with local and national policy, the intension is to maximise and re-use previously developed land; the main aim of which is to promote regeneration and minimise the amount of development on 'Public Open Space' and 'Greenfield Sites'.

Direction to Mecca

As you will be aware, that all Muslims during their prayers face toward Mecca, the direction of their prayer is known referred to as facing Qibla; Qibla is the centre of the great mosque in Mecca, the direction to Qibla from North Manchester is 118 Degrees (From true North). The existing Mosque on the proposal site is not orientated toward the Qibla, this creates awkward space within the building to create rooms facing Qibla. With the proposals for a new build scheme, we have orientated the building so that is faces towards Qibla, thus allowing a more efficient use of the internal floor areas.

Proposed Site Plan

The proposed new Mosque utilises the existing site very efficiently, by orientating the building towards Qibla, we have been able to increase the Nett to Gross areas from 53% to 85%. The proposed building will still be sufficiently away from the site boundary so that to allow a feature boundary treatment, which will be in keeping with the design of the new building, and also allow soft landscaping along the boundary to Heywood Street.

We are not proposing to add any new vehicular or pedestrian access onto the public highway from the proposal site. The existing pedestrian access will continue to be from the North-East corner of the site, this is ideal as most of the residential properties within walking distance of the mosque are located towards the North-East of the proposal site. The vehicular access to the site

will remain as it is, we are not proposing to increase or decrease the extent of the dropped kerb. The proposed car parking layout can accommodate 13 cars, which includes 2 accessible spaces; by double parking, we can manage to fit a further 7 cars in this area. We have also provided 8 bicycle stands, this we hope will encourage people to cycle to the premises.

The bin storage area is located to the West Elevation of the building; this is discreet and not visible from the main public roads and footpath around the proposal site. The bin storage area can easily accommodate three 1100 litre wheelie bins. The bin will be collected from the car park area of the proposed development, please refer the Waste Management Strategy and the Waste Management Plan, submitted with this application.



Proposed Site Plan

Proposed New Accommodation

The accommodation for the proposed new mosque building is split over 4 levels; the basement level was introduced after the ground investigation revealed the extent of foundation work required in this part of the site. The basement floor consist of a kitchen, a dinning area and some resting space, for quiet contemplation, there is also a toilet an ablution point and a shower facility at this level. There is a dedicated stair leading to the basement area from the ground floor. There is also another external stair linked directly to the kitchen which comes out at the West boundary of the site, this allows for easy access to the bin storage area and for any deliveries to the kitchen.

The Ground floor accommodation consists of a large entrance hall, which has a shoe storage facility, leading to the toilets and ablution area. The wide corridor then leads to the management office and 3 double doors open into the main prayer hall. To the front of the prayer hall there is a Janaza Viewing Area and Janaza Wash Room, these are spaces associated with funeral and for people to pay their last respects to the deceased. The Janaza facility is a single storey element and sits outside of what is considered to be the main mosque building; this follows the desired Islamic etiquette for carrying out funeral rituals.

The First Floor accommodation is accessed via the 1800mm wide stairs from the Main entrance hall. The accommodation on this level consists of a female prayers hall, with associated toilets and ablution facility. There are also 6 dedicated classrooms which will be used for teaching children Islamic studies.

The Second Floor accommodation, which is also accessed from the main circulation stair running up from the main entrance on the ground floor; consists of a community hall, this will be used for activities aimed at the wider community, such as parent toddler groups, small function for local resident, who cant afford to hire a hall. This facility will be available to the local community at no charge. There are also 3 additional classrooms at this level, which will be aimed at older children for Islamic studies. We have also provided toilet and ablution facility on this floor, which are dedicated for the community use.

Design Proposals

As the building will sit in a very prominent location within its context, it was of paramount importance to us that we create a building that would work from all the elevations, as the site is surrounded along three sides by public roads.

We want to create a building which will be contemporary in aesthetic but at the same time it is distinguishable as an Islamic building, an aesthetic that showcases contemporary design and inspires the young Muslims in the local area. We are aspiring to create a building which will instil pride and unity in the local community.

To reduce the impact of the part second floor of the building, we have moved the building footprint away from the residential properties on Brinsworth Drive by 0.5 metre.

The material we have used are a red brick which would be in keeping with the red brick in the local area, but we have also introduced an off-white render, which would break up the very red brick aesthetic of this area. This allows the building to stand out from its context. Feature brickwork banding is also used to break up the large areas of brickwork; we a repurposing to use two different type of red bricks, one will be a dark smooth red and the other will be a more rustic lighter red. A pattern taken from Islamic Geometry has been used to create a feature on the second floors, which also allows the introduction of window apertures for natural light and ventilation to this level.

The main entrance will be a 3 storey high feature, which will be glazed with jali-work either side of the central glazed element, this not only creates a dramatic effect and a prominent main entrance but also provided solar shading and privacy screening to a lesser extent.

The minaret is design to reflect the contemporary aesthetic on the main building, although this sit away from the main mosque building, it creates a sense of play, signifying the mosque building. The main body of the minaret is brickwork, matching the brickwork to the main building, at the top of the minaret, we are proposing to finish this in a laser cut stainless steel folded feature, which wraps itself around the brick minaret and finishes to a point. There will be a small light behind the stainless steel feature, subtly lighting the top of the proposed minaret.

The boundary treatment will be a dwarf wall will pillars with metal railing infill, the design of the boundary wall will work with the materials and the design the main building.

We believe our design proposal would create a distinguished community building which would act as a catalyst for regeneration in this area. The building will sit comfortably but notably within its context.



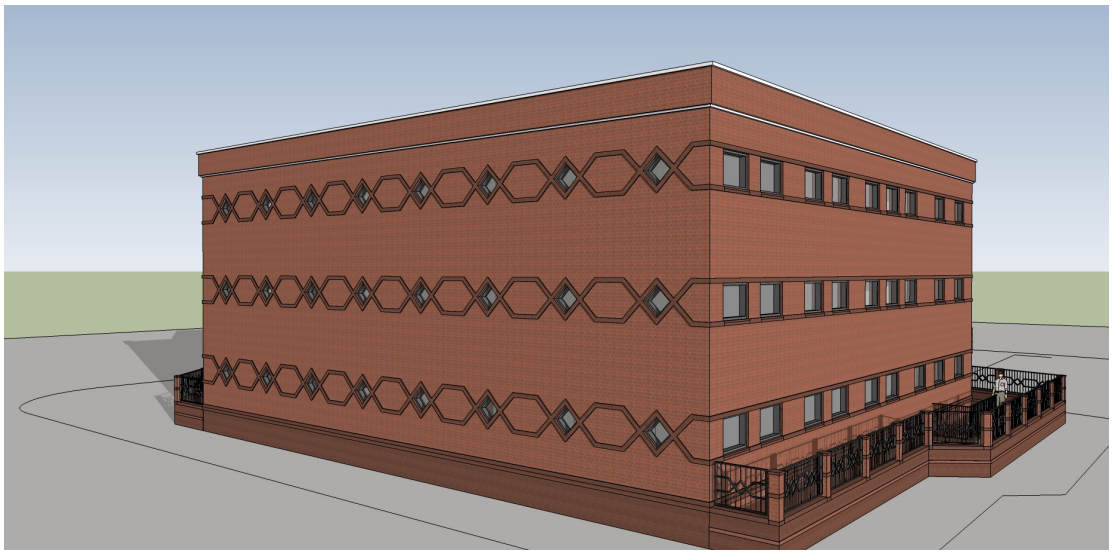
CGI showing the main entrance, and the minaret.



CGI showing the elevation to Heywood Street.



CGI showing the elevation to the car park.



CGI showing the elevation to the circulation spaces and the elevation to the toilet blocks.



CGI showing a close up of the main entrance to the proposed new mosque.



CGI showing a close up view from the car park entrance.

Accessibility

The new building will incorporate a level access to the main entrance, this will be the principle entrance and egress route from the building. We have incorporated a disabled person's toilet (DPT) on the ground floor. The stairs for will be within the ambulant accessible criteria for stairs. We have provided disable refuge areas, within both protected stairs, which will have the required EVC system installed. All new stair going and risers will be in accordance with Approved Document Part 'M'. All accessible facilities for a wheel chairs user are provided on the ground floor

Externally we have provided 2 accessible car parking spaces and all access routes to and the building will be of a sufficient width as to allow a wheelchair user to easily manoeuvre around.

The new development will be design to comply with Approved Document Part 'M' and take on board any applicable DDA recommendations.

Environmental Standards Statement

The new development will endeavour to achieve a high environmental standard in line with the BRE guidelines. The development will achieve a BREAAM Very Good rating.