Comments for Planning Application 143445/FO/2025

Application Summary

Application Number: 143445/FO/2025
Address: British Muslim Heritage Centre College Road Manchester M16 8BP
Proposal: Extension of time for further three years for a temporary marquee
Case Officer: Sue Wills

Customer Details

Name: Not Available
Address: Not Available

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour
Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application
Comment Reasons:
Comment:I have read the associated documents for this planning application and would like to make the following comments, in particular with regards to the travel study and management strategy:

- The management strategy conflates a number of issues including the issue of Islamophobia, the need for community cohesion and the requirement to continue with commercial activities in the marquee in order to generate revenue for the BMHC to be able to maintain the upkeep of the main building with the application for planning permission
- Whilst these are important concerns, they do not have relevance in considering approval for this application
- There are a number of issues with the temporary marquee that have persisted over many years including loss of privacy, damage to neighbourhood amenity and highway and parking issues. Over the last 3 years since the previous permission was granted, issues have included wedding guests setting off fireworks, increased and noisy traffic particularly involving prestige cars, aggressive behaviour from wedding guests, excessive noise from the marquee, lack of adherence to start and finish times, noise from catering staff early in the morning and late at night and lack of sufficient security staff on site to manage parking and traffic flow.
- When the previous application for planning permission was approved in June 2022, there were already considerable concerns relating to the above and it was noted that the event management plan or traffic management plan from 2019 was not being adhered to. Conditions for approval of 2022's planning permission were set out and required implementation of a new event management strategy
- During the last 3 years there have been numerous contraventions of the agreed conditions and complaints have been made to the marquee tenants, the planning enforcement team and the BMHC itself

- Local residents have made considerable efforts to engage with both representatives of the BMHC and the marquee tenants to discuss concerns and find ways to resolve issues around noise, traffic and poor behaviour by guests attending weddings. The statement that complaints have been made by the same individuals, some of whom strongly oppose the Centre's presence is a misrepresentation. Most local residents fully support the centre but are frustrated by the issues relating predominantly to the use of the marquee for weddings, rather than attendance for religious or community cohesion purposes
- Whilst there have been some attempts made by the marquee tenants to resolve issues in which neighbours have made considerable efforts to engage (for example working together to test the volume of the PA and my own suggestion to set up a neighbour's WhatsApp group), by their own admission, the marquee tenants are unable to control poor wedding guest behaviour. For example, on 4th August 2025, the manager confirmed that fireworks and excessive car horning were caused by guests attending that evening's event, which eventually ended with a fight. He also confirmed that, despite him reminding clients in writing and verbally of the event conditions and even with a threat of withdrawal of security deposit, clients often ignore warnings because they will only be attending the marquee on a one off basis. There are therefore no further consequences for them, with the deposit withdrawal not sufficiently acting as a deterrent. But for immediate neighbours, we experience the issues over and over again.
- The management strategy states that residents have been given a dedicated person to report disturbances to and the email of the CEO. If this is the case, I do not know who the contact is and since the new CEO started, they do not respond to emails nor have they made any attempts to engage with the immediate residents. This is in contrast to the previous CEO who was keen to work together to resolve issues
- The Clean Air Whalley Range project conducted their own travel survey on a Friday afternoon after prayers (with permission of the BMHC) and spoke to 64 people. 70% came by car and no one travelled by bike or bus. Of those that came by car, none would consider coming by bus and those that mentioned cycling generally felt it was unsafe. Of those coming by car, reason given tended to be because of lack of time or health. We also have an automated traffic counter in place on College Road should any statistics be required. There is no incentive or inclination for centre users to travel to the centre by foot or bike. The suggestion of an enforced car sharing policy is more likely to lead to more cars being parked off-site on the road, rather than a reduction in traffic.
- However, the main concern is wedding guests who are primarily travelling some distance and given the nature of the event, are highly unlikely to consider travelling by public transport, especially given that the centre is some distance from the city centre and major transport links
- The strategy admits that there are still issues despite some of the improvements put in place. A number of potential resolutions are suggested, such as earlier finish times, changes to lighting, installation of sound insulation and potentially reducing the number of attendees. There is no guarantee that these measures would be put in place, especially if not cost-effective
- It also mentions moving towards using the marquee more community focused events, but presumably again that would bring in reduced revenue and have an impact on the investment required for maintenance
- I would therefore object to this application on the grounds that the marquee is in the middle of a

residential area and is not suitable for the commercial purpose of weddings. Experience has shown over many years that, regardless of creating event management strategies and travel plans, by the very nature of the events, the marquee tenants are unable to effectively prevent the issues of loss of privacy, damage to neighbourhood amenity and highway and parking as outlined above. There is no evidence that this will be any different over the next 3 years.