

# Planning Statement

B R L   d e s i g n

architects | planning consultants

*Introduction of nursery (Use Class E) to existing Islamic  
Community, Education and Culture Centre*

Quba | Unit C Golden Crescent | Hayes | UB3 1AQ

**On behalf of Quba Masjid**

**August 2024**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This Planning Statement (statement) has been prepared by Rob Heard (Chartered Town Planner) on behalf of Quba Masjid (the applicants) in support of a planning application to introduce a Nursery Use (Use Class E) to the existing Islamic Community, Education and Culture Centre (Use Class F1) at the site.
- 1.2. This statement provides a description of the site and proposed development and an analysis of all relevant planning policy and legislation, and any other relevant material planning considerations, before reaching a balanced conclusion.

## **2. Site Location and Description**

- 2.1. The site comprises a four-storey former industrial building, currently the Quba Masjid and Education Centre, located to the south of Golden Crescent in Hayes. The current F1 use was allowed by the planning Inspectorate at appeal on 20 February 2009 (PINS Refs: APP/R5510/C/08/2082144; APP/L3815/A/08/2073651). The building was subsequently extended following the grant of formal planning permission in 2010.
- 2.2. With the exception of a building located to the north east of the site, which is used as a Sikh Temple, the site is bounded by industrial units on all sides. Residential properties lie beyond these uses to the north and east. The site is accessed via a narrow lane off Golden Crescent, and a limited number of parking spaces accommodated adjacent to the building's east and north elevations.
- 2.3. The site falls within the Blyth Road/Printing House Industrial and Business Area and also falls within the Hayes/West Drayton Corridor. The site occupies a sustainable location, within walking distance of the many local services and amenities available on Botwell High Street.

## **3. Proposed Development**

- 3.1. It is proposed to change the use of the second floor of the building to a childrens nursery (Use Class E). This does not require any external alterations and the exterior of the building is not affected.
- 3.2. The space shown as Classrooms and Prayer Areas on the proposed second floor layout of the latest planning permission (36918/APP/2014/888; see planning

history below) will be used as a nursery during the daytime whilst the teaching space is not in use. The Classrooms and Prayer Areas are only used in the evenings

- 3.3. Any new signage proposed will be addressed through a separate application for Advertisement Consent. No changes are proposed to the curtilage of the building or boundary treatments. The proposed nursery will be government funded and available for all of the community to use, whilst remaining an ancillary element to be used in association with the existing religious community centre use at the site.

#### **4. Relevant Planning History**

##### ***Planning Applications***

- 4.1. The relevant planning history is set out below.

- 36918/APP/2017/1215; Variation of the following conditions as attached to planning permission ref. 36918/APP/2010/2469 (as extended by 36918/APP/2014/888 and amended by 36918/APP/2016/3717). Condition 10 (cycle parking) involving reduction in number of cycle parking spaces provided from 46 to 10; Condition 11 (parking, turning and access) involving reduction of off street car parking spaces from 7 to 6 and loss of turning area for servicing vehicles; Condition 14 (hours of use) to allow for hours of use of upper two floors to be unrestricted. **Granted Conditionally**
- 36918/APP/2014/888; Application to extend the time frame to implement approved scheme 36918/APP/2010/2469 (Alterations and additions including extension to east elevation at first floor level (above existing car parking spaces) with an additional 2 storeys above existing building and a curved stairwell tower to the north elevation). **Granted Conditionally**
- 36918/APP/2010/2469; Alterations and additions including extension to east elevation at first floor level (above existing car parking spaces) with an additional 2 storeys above existing building and a curved stairwell tower to the north elevation. **Granted Conditionally**
- 36918/APP/2007/1316; Change of use from plastic moulding factory (Class B2) to an Islamic culture and education community centre (Class

D1) with classrooms, computer room, library, kitchen, office and ladies and men's prayer room with installation of an emergency exit from first floor (Part retrospective application). **Allowed on Appeal**

## 5. The Adopted Development Plan

- 5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan (DP) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2. The London Plan 2021 is the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years and the Mayor's vision for Good Growth. The Plan is part of the statutory development plan for London, meaning that the policies in the Plan should inform decisions on planning applications across the capital. Borough's Local Plans must be in 'general conformity' with the London Plan, ensuring that the planning system for London operates in a joined-up way and reflects the overall strategy for how London can develop sustainably, which the London Plan sets out.
- 5.3. At the local level, the Hillingdon Local Plan (Parts 1 and 2) provides the adopted DP. Whilst these plans pre-date the London Plan, they are in general conformity with it and therefore remain the main tool with regards to the determination of planning applications.
- 5.4. The relevant DP policies are as follows:

### London Plan

- GG1: Building strong and inclusive communities
- GG2: Making the best use of land
- S3: Education and childcare facilities

### Hillingdon Local Plan

#### *Part 1*

- Policy CI1: Community Infrastructure Provision
- Policy CI3: Culture

## *Part 2*

- Policy DMCI 1: Retention of Existing Community Facilities
- Policy DMCI 1A: Development of New Education Floorspace
- Policy DMCI 2: New Community Infrastructure
- Policy DMHB 11: Design of New Development
- Policy DMT 1: Managing Transport Impacts
- Policy DMT 2: Highways Impacts
- Policy DMT 6: Vehicle Parking

## **6. Other Material Planning Considerations**

### ***National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (Framework)***

- 6.1. The Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 6.2. The Framework is an important material consideration that, on its own, is of such weight that it can justify a decision contrary to the relevant policies of the DP.
- 6.3. Paragraph 8 sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development which are "*economic, social and environmental*".
- 6.4. Paragraph 11 of the Framework states that there is a:

*presumption in favour of sustainable development... for decision-taking this means:*

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay*".

### ***Building a strong, competitive economy***

- 6.5. Paragraph 85 supports economic growth:

*Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.*

***Promoting healthy and safe communities***

6.6. Paragraph 97 confirms that:

*To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.*

***Promoting sustainable development***

6.7. Paragraph 115 states:

*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.*

***Making effective use of land***

6.8. Paragraph 123 and 124 of the Framework states that planning should:

*Promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment... in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.*

*[and]*

*give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.*

*[and]*

*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.*

## 7. Assessment

7.1. The main issues raised by the proposals are:

- Whether the principle of development is acceptable;
- Whether the technical details are acceptable;
- Whether the proposals provide for public benefits.

7.2. The identified main issues are comprehensively addressed below.

**- *Whether the principle of development is acceptable***

7.3. The adopted Local Plan (Part 1; Strategic Policies) sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the Borough, what is going to happen, where, and how this will be achieved. Part 2 (Development Management Policies) forms part of Hillingdon's Local Plan, and its purpose is to provide detailed policies that will form the basis of the Council's decisions on individual planning applications. The London Plan is also relevant to the determination of planning applications in the Borough.

7.4. With regards to community uses, the strategic policies in the London Plan and local plan aim to safeguard sites for future education, health and community service needs and also to protect existing sites and premises.

7.5. Policy GG1 (Building strong and inclusive communities) of the London Plan recognises that London is made up of diverse communities. Specifically it requires developments to *provide access to good quality community spaces, services, amenities and infrastructure that accommodate, encourage and strengthen communities, increasing active participation and social integration, and addressing social isolation*. The proposals will add a further service to the existing community and education use at the site, providing users with accessible on site childcare. This will contribute to building a strong, inclusive and resilient community.

7.6. Policy GG2 (Making the best use of land) aims to create successful sustainable mixed-use places that make the best use of land. The supporting text to the policy confirms that *the key to achieving this will be taking a rounded approach to the way neighbourhoods operate, making them work not only more space-efficiently but also better for the people who use them. This will mean*

*creating places of higher density in appropriate locations to get more out of limited land, encouraging a mix of land uses, and co-locating different uses to provide communities with a wider range of services and amenities. The proposals accord with this policy, introducing a new, complementary use to the site and making better use of the existing building, whilst increasing its vibrancy.*

- 7.7. The supporting text to policy S3 (Education and childcare facilities) states that *It is estimated that an additional 100,000 childcare places will be needed between 2016-2041. The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to ensure that there are enough childcare places to enable parents to work or train, and also to ensure that there are sufficient funded early education places for all three and four year-olds within the local authority area. In consultation with parents, the private, voluntary and independent sectors, and other key partners, boroughs should ensure the location and provision of a range of childcare services in different types of settings to meet the needs of local communities*
- 7.8. The proposals will help to deliver the aims and aspirations of this policy, and will provide childcare facilities at an existing community and education site. The current use and facility provides a safe and accessible space for practisers of the Islamic Faith, and the introduction of a nursery use will help establish the centre as a facility that meets the diverse needs of its users, whilst also introducing the centre to the wider, non Muslim community.
- 7.9. At the local level, Policy CI1 of the local plan seeks to ensure that community and social infrastructure is provided in Hillingdon to cater for the needs of the existing community and future populations. Amongst other things, CI1 confirms that this will be achieved by:
  1. *Resisting of the loss of community facilities, and where the loss of these facilities is justified it will seek to ensure that resulting development compensates these uses to ensure no net loss;*
  2. *Supporting the retention and enhancement of existing community facilities;*
  3. *Supporting extensions to existing schools and the development of new schools and youth facilities;*
  4. *Encouraging the development of multi-purpose facilities that can provide a range of services and facilities to the community at one accessible location;*

5. *Promoting innovation in service provision and recognising that there are a range of modes appropriate for providing for all sections of the community;*
6. *Requiring development to contribute towards the provision of community facilities to meet the needs of new communities and mitigate impacts on existing communities;*

7.10. Policy CI3 states that *To ensure that cultural uses help improve the quality of life of residents and visitors, a strong and well-developed cultural provision will be established by (amongst other things):*

- ***Safeguarding the quality of existing viable cultural facilities and supporting proposals for new and improved cultural facilities;***

7.11. The proposals are supported by the relevant strategic policies within Part 1 of the local plan and are in accordance with the overall planning vision and strategy for the Borough. The introduction of a nursery in this location will contribute towards the retention and enhancement of an existing community facility, a specific requirement of Policy CI1 (2). The proposals will also support the provision of a new education related facility at the site and will specifically provide a multi purpose facility that will offer a range of services and facilities to both the Islamic and wider community. This is in direct accordance with part (4) of CI1 and will contribute to the delivery of this policy.

7.12. With regards to community facilities, the supporting text to Policy CI3 states that *Protection and enhancement of existing facilities will remain a key aspect of future strategy and opportunities to maximise the historic environment as a cultural resource will be identified wherever possible. More emphasis will be placed upon their improved and more flexible use to meet the needs of local communities, particularly the needs of young and older people.*

7.13. The proposals will also directly contribute to the delivery of CI3, by safeguarding the future of an existing community facility that supports cultural diversity.

7.14. Part 2 of the Local Plan provides detailed policies that are intended to form the basis of the Council's decisions on individual planning applications. As confirmed, the introduction of a childs nursery at the site will help to secure the future use of the facility and provide an additional use at the site that will benefit

existing users of the building and the wider non Muslim community. The proposals will therefore actively contribute to the retention of an existing community facility, in accordance with DMC1.

- 7.15. The proposals are also in accordance with Policy DMCI 1A (Development of New Education Floorspace) as they provide a nursery facility for pre-school aged children. Policy DMCI 2 (New Community Infrastructure) states that ***Proposals for the refurbishment and re-use of existing premises for community facilities will be supported.***
- 7.16. The site represents a sustainable location, within an existing settlement and on an established industrial/employment site. The addition of a nursery at the site is in accordance with the overall spatial strategy as set out within the Framework and both the London and Borough plans, which seek to guide development towards sustainable locations.
- 7.17. Furthermore, the proposed use is very similar to the existing use in terms of characteristics and impacts, and whilst the nursery use might generate slightly more trips, this won't have a detrimental impact upon the local highway network or highway safety. The proposed introduction of a nursery use at the site is compatible with the range of existing uses in the area, which is characterised by business uses typical to an employment site. The proposed use is therefore appropriate in this location and will be complementary to the established pattern of development and nearby land uses.
- 7.18. The proposals are acceptable in principle, securing the future use of an existing building whilst providing a complimentary use to those currently provided at the site, at an appropriate location that is accessible and close to local services and amenities. The proposals are also in accordance with the relevant spatial policies as set out in the strategic London and Borough plan strategies, and also the local development management documents.

***- Whether the technical details are acceptable***

**Residential Amenity**

- 7.19. As well as strategic policies addressing principle issues, the Local Plan (Part 2) also provides development control policies for managing change and development in the plan area. These are topic specific policies and provide the main decision making framework (in association with the National Planning Policy

Framework and Neighbourhood Plan) with regards to the consideration of planning applications and the general assessment of development proposals.

7.20. The proposals are located on an established industrial estate and are not close to existing residential properties. No impact upon amenity is therefore identified and the proposed use is low impact with regards to the operations being undertaken at the site. No industrial processes or noisy activities are proposed. The proposals do not raise any amenity concerns.

Design

7.21. At present no changes are proposed to the external appearance of the building and the scope of development is limited to the change of use of the building only, to include a nursery use alongside the existing Community and Education uses. If required, new signage will be addressed via a separate advertisement consent application.

7.22. The surrounding development is mainly characterised by larger scale buildings of a similar scale and appearance to the application property. Nearby buildings are functional in design and non have particular architectural merit. The proposals will not impact upon the existing townscape, and are in accordance with Policy DMHB 11 (Design of New Development).

Highways

7.23. The site is sustainably located within an existing employment site, whilst also being close to services and amenities and local bus services. It is accessible by foot, bicycle, public transport and private vehicle.

7.24. The trip generation associated with the proposed use is likely to be similar to, albeit slightly more than, the trip generation associated with the existing use of the building. However, visitors to the site will be dropping off and picking up only. As a result there will be no impact upon parking demand at the site and it is proposed that the existing allocated car parking spaces at the site will be used for the dropping off and picking up of children. This will be managed by the Centre and arrivals staggered to ensure congestion does not occur.

7.25. In support of this application, a Travel Plan has been produced by the applicants (Trustees of Quba Masjid and Education Centre). This Travel Plan has been updated from the version approved as part of the previous S73 application

(36918/APP/2017/1215), to reflect the addition of nursery provision to the centre. The purpose of the nursery is to further support the local community and make optimum use of the existing centre, which is under occupied for much of the daytime. The travel plan is supported by an accompanying demand and operational statement, which details the proposed number of children accessing the nursery and how parents/guardians/carers will safely drop off and pick up their child/children.

- 7.26. In total, the proposed number of children accessing the nursery will be 35 children for each session (morning and afternoon). It is anticipated many children will be booked into both sessions, so the likely number of individual children accessing the centre on a daily basis will be approximately 50-55 No. In addition, following discussion with community visitors to QM & EC, and understanding the likely uptake of nursery spaces, QM & EC anticipate many of the children accessing the nursery will be accompanied by siblings or other family members, therefore the number of trips generated from the nursery will be in the region of 40 in total (20 for drop off and 20 for pick up).
- 7.27. Following consultation with existing users of the centre, QM & EC understand that a significant number of child/children drop-off and pick up will align with parents/carers visiting the centre for other uses such as prayer. Therefore, it is anticipated that there will be significant number shared trips for persons already travelling to the Centre, resulting in minimal new trips.
- 7.28. Having undertaken a survey of existing users to the centre and given the distances travelled by these users, who generally live very close to QM & EC (within 1 mile), it is understood less than 15% travel by car and park at nearby public car parks. Whilst it's accepted that dropping off and picking up children to and from a nursery is more likely to necessitate the use of a car, due to the geographic radius of the catchment area and low car ownership within the borough, QM & EC are confident that no more than 5-10 vehicular trips will be generated for each session, with negligible impact to the existing operation or indeed local residents or businesses..
- 7.29. Whilst the number of additional trips to the site will be limited, various measures will be implemented to mitigate any potential impact to highways and highway safety. These are outlined below:
  1. Two drop-off and pick up parking spaces will be dedicated for sole use of the nursery. These spaces will be for temporary parking whilst children are dropped off or picked up.

2. The nursery will operate over 2 defined sessions, which will assist in staggering the number of visitors throughout the day.
3. The afternoon session will end at 3.30pm, thus avoiding peak rush hour traffic.
4. Pedestrian priority road markings leading from Gloden Crescent to the main entrance will be installed.

7.30. Following extensive consultation with the various local groups, The Trustees of the Centre see the addition of a nursery school in this location as playing a vital role in supporting the community it serves and making beneficial use of under-utilised space during the daytime. Whilst the Centre is hugely successful in meeting the needs of the Islamic community, the Trustees recognise it can do more to support local families and provide additional services. The addition of much needed nursery space for this area will assist the Trustees in achieving this long term aspiration.

7.31. Further to the above, as the existing Community Centre facility is limited to use specifically for religious purposes by practisers of the Islamic Faith, many of the trips to the property will be linked to existing trips by users of the Community Centre.

7.32. As outlined above, the introduction of a nursery use at the site is unlikely to generate significant additional demand for car parking and the site represents a sustainable and accessible location. No conflict with policies DMT 1 (Managing Transport Impacts) and Policy DMT 2 (Highways Impacts) is therefore identified.

#### Flood Risk , Drainage and Ecology

7.33. The application site falls within Flood Zone 1, the area least at risk of flooding. As already confirmed the proposals do not result in a physical development at the site and thus the proposals have no impact upon either foul drainage or surface water run off.

7.34. Due to the lack of external and physical changes to the building, there will be no impact upon ecology or biodiversity at the site as the application is for a change of use only. The proposals will thus have no ecology or biodiversity impacts.

## **8. Significant Benefits of the Proposal**

- 8.1. The proposals will make more effective use of an existing community and education centre, located in a highly sustainable location and close to other employment uses.
- 8.2. The proposals will also deliver a significant social and economic benefit through the creation of jobs when the new business is in operation.
- 8.3. The proposals would benefit from a choice of and access to a range of transport methods including sustainable options and are within close proximity to amenities such as shops, open space and recreational areas.
- 8.4. The proposals will provide dedicated childcare facilities which will complement the existing uses at the site and help to secure the site as a multi function education and community use for the Islamic Faith and wider community.
- 8.5. The above mentioned significant benefits are considered to weigh in favour of a positive determination of the application. This is in addition to the clear support afforded by the adopted DP.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1. In principle, the addition of a childcare facility at the site is deemed appropriate and acceptable given that the building is existing and currently provides education and community uses to followers of the Islamic Faith. Further, the site constitutes brownfield land and occupies a sustainable location. The proposals will benefit the area, providing more effective use of an existing site and much needed childcare facilities.
- 9.2. The technical details of the proposals are deemed acceptable and a thorough analysis of all of the technical planning matters and material considerations is provided above in section 7 of this report.
- 9.3. The proposals accord with the DP and therefore are in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework. As established in this statement the numerous significant benefits of the proposal weighs in favour of the proposed development. Consequently, the proposals should be approved without delay.