

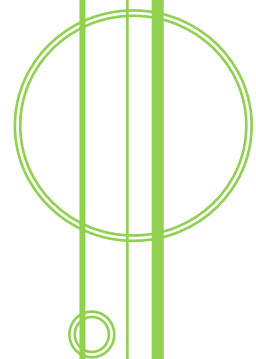


PLANNING STATEMENT

Masjid - E - Bilal, 52 Bury Old Road, Prestwich, M25 0ER
Erection of extension & renewal Temporary Consent (3 years)
for the Siting of 1 no. Portacabin for Classroom Use

Europa Business Park, Building 67
Bird Hall Lane
Stockport
SK3 0XA

November 2019



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Inspire Planning Solutions Ltd on behalf of the Applicant, Prestwich Muslim Welfare Trust, in support of an application seeking consent for the continued siting of a portable classroom block within the grounds of Masjid-e-Bilal, 52 Bury Old Road, following the most recent granting of temporary consent (LPA ref no. 60004) in 2016. In addition, consent is sought for the erection of a front extension to this block and a covered area to the rear. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying plans and other supporting information.
- 1.2 Consent was first sought for the siting of a portable classroom at the application site in 2006 (application ref no. 45759). In 2016, a three-year consent was again granted (LPA ref no. 60004) and the Applicant intends to renew it for another three years. In addition, consent for a front extension is sought to provide an entry foyer for users of the site, as an entry space to shield from the weather, remove shoes and to provide a short link between the classrooms and toilet facilities in the main building as well as a covered area to the rear of the class facility.
- 1.3 The centre is highly regarded amongst the local community and the proposed development will enhance the centre and continue to benefit the local community. More details of the merits of the scheme will be set out subsequently. The Statement will show that the development described above is acceptable in principle and complies with local and national planning policy whilst bringing about a number of other benefits. The statement summarises the description of the site and proposed development; its compliance with the development plan and national planning policy and the assessment of other material considerations. It concludes that planning permission should be granted.

2.0 Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site relates to the Masjid Bilal which has been located at 52 Bury Old Road since 1999. The Centre provides both a Mosque (worshipping) and teaching element to local worshippers and students of all ages. The temporary classroom has enabled the separation of education provision from the main space that is used for worship.

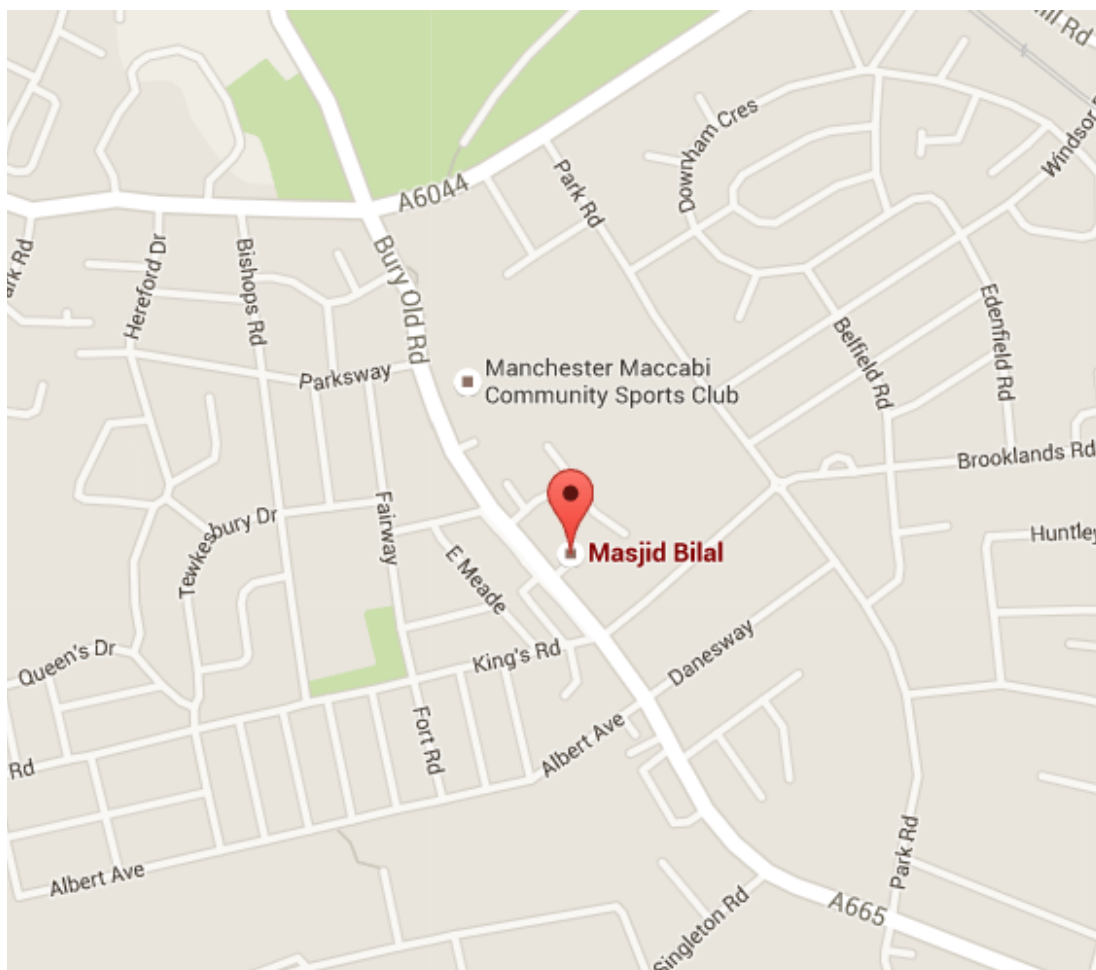


Figure 1. Application Site Location *Source: Google Maps*

- 2.2 The centre is a largely single storey building located within a well-contained rectangular plot surrounded by mature trees and vegetation. Areas of car

parking are located at the side and to the front of the building and the main access is from Bury Old Road.

- 2.3 The site is located within the urban boundary as indicated on the adopted local plan proposals map within a largely residential area with some community uses in the vicinity including a primary school and a sports club. A nearby car park (Maccabi Social and Sports Centre) provides overspill parking facilities at peak periods with the consent of the landowner. The site is within a highly sustainable locality close to public transport links.

3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1 This application seeks consent for the continued siting of a long-standing temporary classroom (another three-year temporary consent is sought) as well as for a single storey front extension which provides an entry foyer for users of the centre that would be accessing the classroom space. No operational changes are being sought and this space is very much designed to improve comfort and circulation by providing access to toilet facilities in the main building. A small covered area is also proposed to the rear:

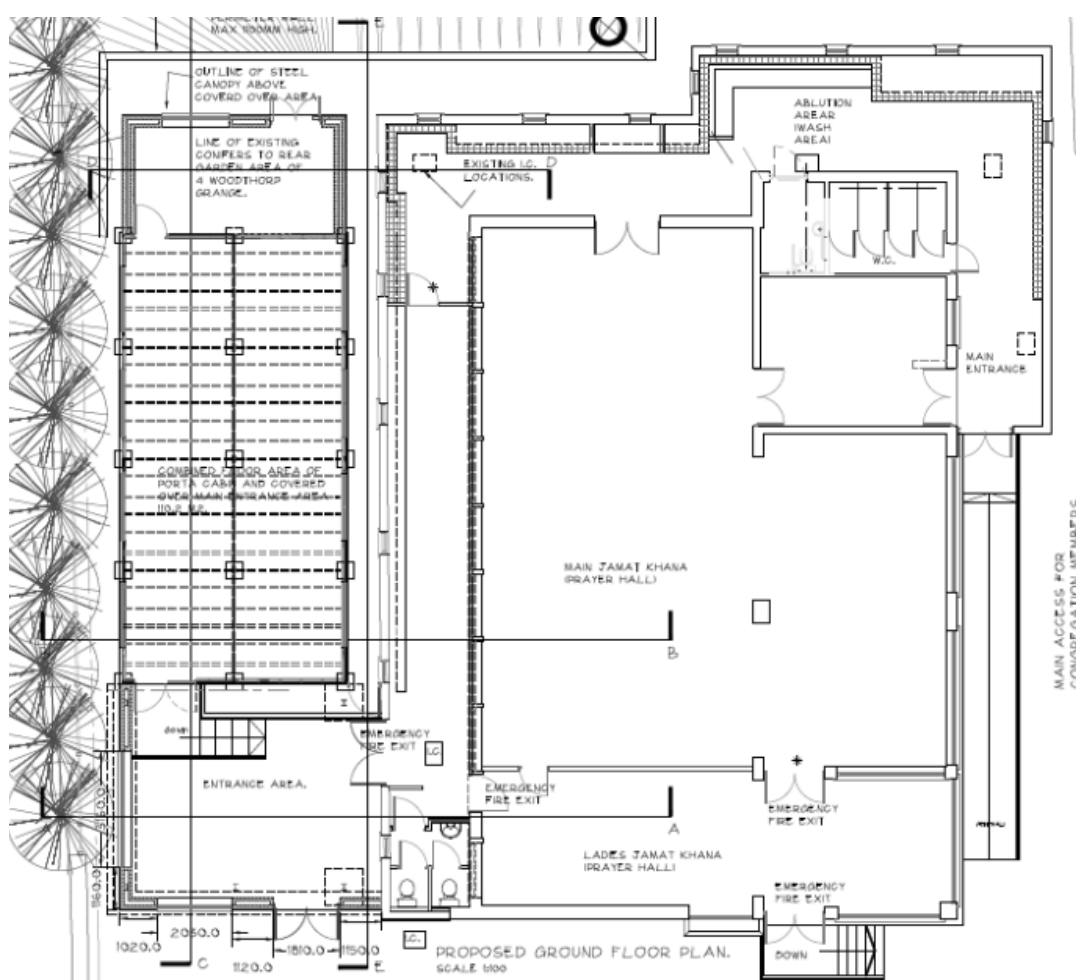


Figure 2. Ground floor plan extract showing location of the entrance area via an extension Source: Younus Khan Architectural Consultant (not to scale)

- 3.2 The presence of the class room block has enabled the centre to separate the teaching/learning element from the main prayer hall. The five daily prayers in Islam are performed at times determined essentially by the position of the sun in the sky and therefore differ throughout the year. Not only did the two elements conflict within one another with comings and goings of worshipers disrupting lessons and vice versa, but the centre's management team stated that with different timed prayers throughout the year, it was difficult to plan lesson times around the ever-changing availability of the prayer hall. The temporary class facilities has alleviated some of these problems and the front extension would provide a further qualitative improvement through the provision of an entrance foyer for users who would have a hallway space, before entering into the classroom as well as a covered connection to toilet facilities.

4.0 Policy Context

- 4.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). The development plan for the purposes of the application proposal comprises the Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1997). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also relevant.

Bury UDP

- 4.2 The following policies are relevant to the application proposal:

- Policy EN1 - Built Environment – The Council will seek to protect, preserve and enhance the character, appearance and amenity of the Borough's built environment.
- EN1/1 - Visual Amenity - Development will not be permitted where proposals would have a detrimental effect on public views or visual amenity
- EN1/2 - Townscape and Built Design - The Council will give favourable consideration to proposals, which do not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the particular character and townscape of the Borough's towns, villages and other settlements. Factors to be considered when assessing proposals will include the external appearance and design of the proposal in relation to its height, scale, density and layout; the relationship of the proposal to the surrounding area and the choice and use of materials.
- Policy CF1 - Proposals for New and Improved Community Facilities - Proposals for new and improved community facilities will generally be looked on favourably by the Council. The Council will, look favourably on

proposals for additional or improved community facilities, where these do not conflict with amenity or the local environment.

- Policy CF1/1 - Location of New Community Facilities - Proposals for new and improved community facilities will be considered with regard to the impact on residential amenity and the local environment; traffic generation and car parking provision and the scale and size of the development.
- HT5/1 - Access for Those with Special Needs - The Council will encourage the provision of satisfactory access to public transport, car parks, pedestrian areas and public and private buildings for the mobility impaired and those with special needs.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.3 The NPPF requires planning decisions for social and cultural facilities to take account of an integrated approach to consider the location of housing, economic uses, and community facilities and services. The NPPF also mentions that planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities (such as meeting places, cultural buildings and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.

4.4 The NPPF also attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, seeing design as a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Development should be high quality and inclusive. The NPPF requires planning authorities to take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

5.0 Planning Appraisal

5.1 The purpose of this section of the Statement is to identify and assess the main planning considerations raised by the proposals in the context of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance. The key issues are set out as follows;

- the principle of the development, having regard to the provisions of the adopted Development Plan and other local planning policy documents;
- the effect of development on residential amenity,
- the effect of development on the character and appearance of the area; and;
- the effect of development on the local highway network.

5.2 Each of these matters is considered below.

The principle of development

5.3 The rationale behind the proposed siting of the portable classroom block within the site has already been explained and considered acceptable in the granting of previous consents. The centre has operated from the site since 1999 and is a well-utilised and highly regarded facility serving the local community. Permitting the proposal will enable the centre to continue to deliver higher quality teaching and learning sessions alongside uninterrupted worship. The entry foyer improves circulation and allows users to enter in an appropriate manner, particularly if there is inclement weather into an intermediate space, as opposed to entering directly into the teaching room. In

addition the proposal would allow the centre to provide direct access from the class space to welfare facilities in the main building.

- 5.4 Local planning policy encourages proposals for ‘improvements to community facilities’ (UDP Policy CF1) whilst the NPPF recognises community facilities including places of worship in having a key role in enhancing the sustainability of neighbourhoods and residential environments. It is within this context of an improved community facility offering that the current proposal should be considered, as it has been considered previously by the Council who have found it to provide a valuable facility.
- 5.5 Given the above, there is not considered to be any conflict with the spatial development policies of the adopted development plan and the NPPF advises that proposals, which accord with the development plan, should be approved without delay. Permitting the proposal will not result in any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of its approval, and this is confirmed in the following assessment of the detailed material considerations relevant to the application.

The effect of development on residential amenity and the character and appearance of the area

- 5.6 The proposal represents a simple development, which is in keeping with the design of the host building and of a similar height and scale. The structure will not be prominent in views from the highway given that it is to the side of the main building and the wider site is enclosed and well-screened. Nevertheless, such structures are commonplace within the built environment particularly at school sites, where they provide additional teaching and learning space. The front extension is single storey and would appear subordinate to the main

building. Its final appearance can be controlled by condition if it is deemed necessary.



Figure 3: Site is well screened by mature trees to the front and is also well screened to the side *Source: Google Maps*

5.7 Whilst there are some properties bounding the north west boundary of the site (Woodthorpe Grange/Court), the proposal will not harm residential amenity given that trees run alongside a sizable boundary fence and wall which greatly limits views in to the site. The relatively small, single storey structure does not represent an overbearing or dominant feature; nor would the covered area to the rear of the class room, when viewed from the rear. Given the level differences and boundary, there would not be overlooking or privacy issues. As such permitting the proposal would have no impact on residential or visual amenity. There have been no known concerns to date arising from the temporary classroom and permitting the proposal, including the extension to its front, would not materially affect the usage of the centre.

5.8 To conclude, the design and siting of the proposal satisfies the requirements of UDP Policy EN1, which seeks to protect the character, appearance and amenity of Bury's built environment, by creating a development that relates well to the host building and surrounding area at a practical and affordable cost. This also ensures that the proposal is compliant with Policy EN1/2, which

supports applications which will not have an unacceptable impact on character and townscape, particularly in relation to the materials and relating to the surrounding area. There would also be no conflict with Policy CF1/1 of the UDP in relation to residential amenity.

The effect of development on the local highway network

- 5.9 As shown on the accompanying plans, the siting of the proposed portable block did not affect the number of car parking spaces available; the front extension similarly does not affect any existing provision, as shown in the following approved plan from the previous application:

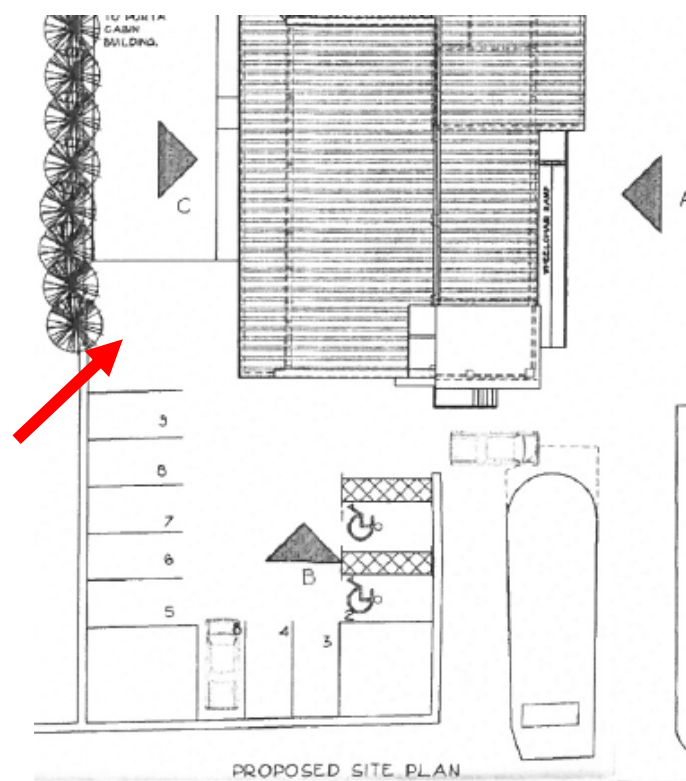


Figure 4. Site plan extract from 2016 approved application showing area of land now proposed to be occupied by extension *Source: Younus Khan*

Architectural Consultant (not to scale)

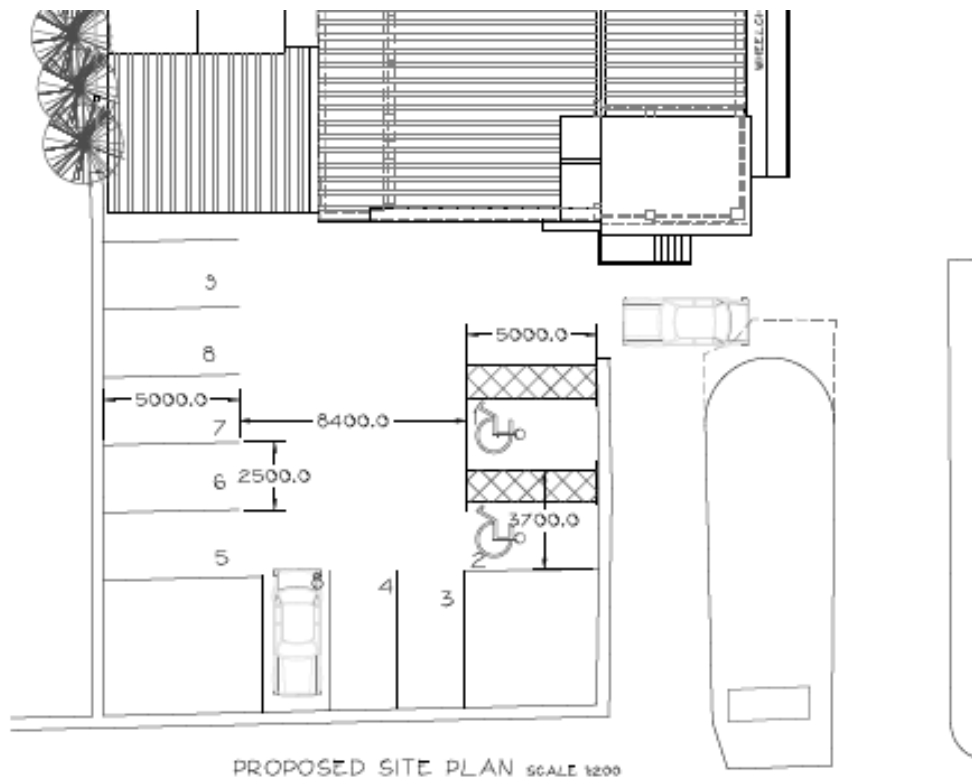


Figure 5. Site plan extract proposed illustrating the parking layout unaffected

Source: Younus Khan Architectural Consultant (not to scale)

5.10 For the reasons presented on the previous permissions for temporary consent, the proposal will not create an additional requirement for car parking or additional trips to the centre. This is also considered to be the position with the proposal. As such permitting this scheme will not adversely impact the local highway network through traffic generation or parking demand. A 'Traffic Management Plan' is included within Appendix 1 which details overflow parking on a nearby car park. This arrangement was provided previously and as referenced within the Officer's report for app ref no: 16/143, enabled the site to provide further parking nearby at peak periods:

"On Fridays, the Maccabi Social and Sports Centre will allow the Masjid-E Bilal Islamic Centre to use the Macabbi Car Park car park from 12.45---2.30 pm".

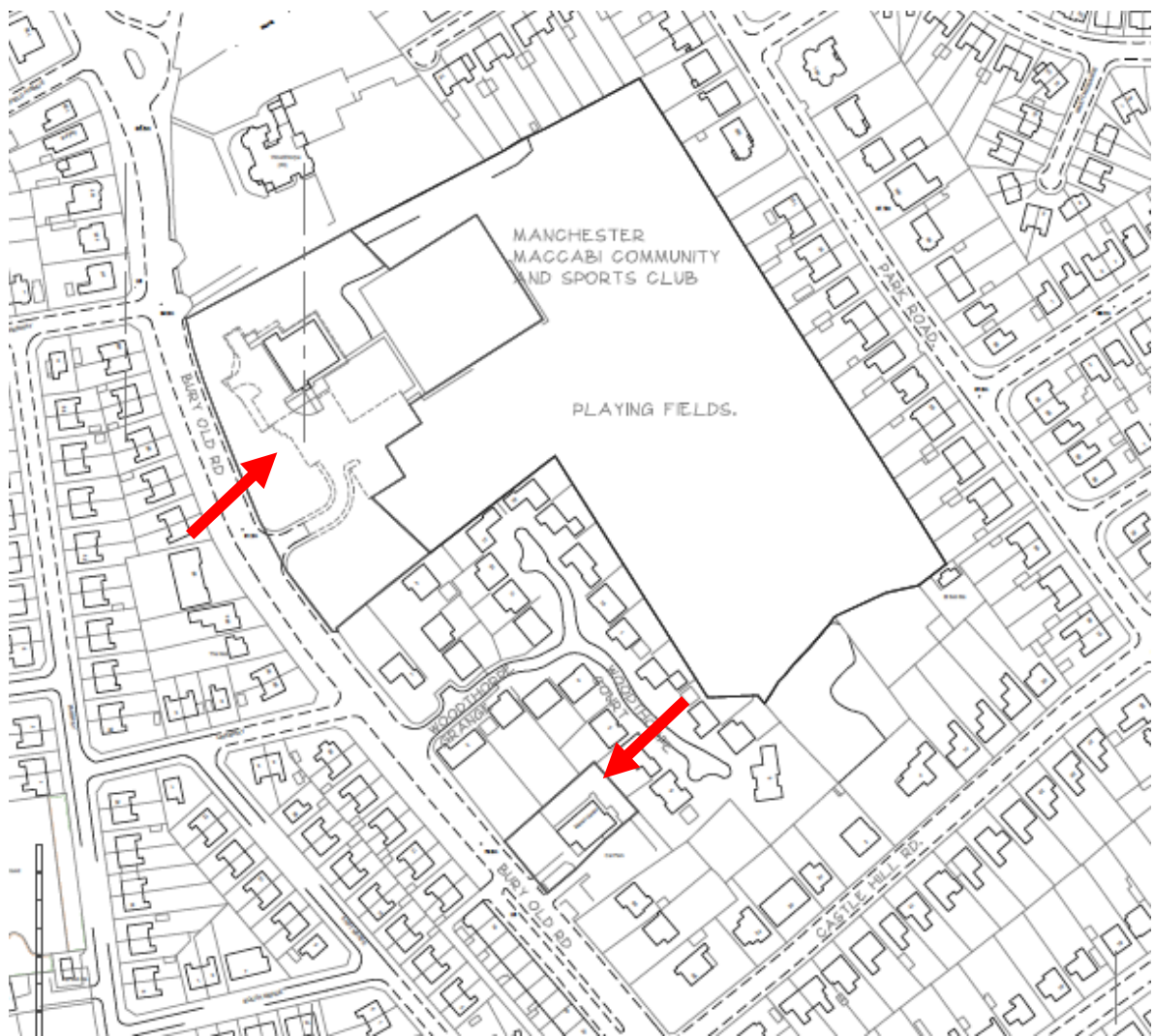


Figure 6. Location Plan extract showing application site and nearby Maccabi Sports Club *Source: Younus Khan Architectural Consultant (not to scale)*

- 5.11 The proposal will not affect any other arrangements and it is therefore considered that safe movement and access to the proposal can be achieved. The development, as set out previously, would improve the circulation within the building for users.
- 5.12 To conclude, the proposal would in no way undermine the intentions of UDP policies HT6/2 Pedestrian/Vehicular Conflict or HT2/4 Car Parking and New Development. The Applicant would continue operating in a manner which has been considered to be acceptable by the LPA.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 This Statement has justified the merits and acceptability of the proposed siting of a portable classroom block within the grounds of Masjide-Bilal as well as an extension to its front and covered area to the rear. The class room space, although modest in size, has been of a great benefit to the existing centre which has operated successfully since 1999 and is highly regarded and well-used. The modest extension to the front has been designed to provide a covered area to improve the quality and experience of users of the class facility.
- 6.2 Similar proposals has previously been assessed by the Council and found to be acceptable in terms of its visual effect, as well as in terms of amenity and highway safety – this development, which is effectively the same but with a further minor additions, would also be acceptable for the reasons set out.
- 6.3 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, and requires them to look for solutions rather than problems and seek to approve applications for sustainable development wherever possible.
- 6.4 For the reasons set out in this Statement and the supporting application plans and documentation, the Council is requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development with appropriate conditions.

Appendix 1 – Traffic Management Plan

- The access and parking arrangements on the application site will be maintained as shown on the proposed site plan.
- On Fridays, the Maccabi Social and Sports Centre will allow the Masjid-E Bilal Islamic Centre to use the Macabbi Car Park car park from 12.45-2.30 pm.
- On Fridays, there shall be a 'car parking warden' organising the parking on the site of 52 Bury Old Road and, when full, requesting worshippers to park at the Macabbi car park further along Bury Old Road.