

Al Bilal Mosque, Bury Old Road, Prestwich

Parking Capacity Assessment

Our reference: OP/240049/TN01

Author: Orla Proffitt

Date: 29 February 2024

Reviewed: Joanne Ibbotson

Date: 06 March 2024

Introduction

1. SCP have been appointed by Masjid E Bilal (Islamic Centre) to provide transport planning consultancy services in support of the demolition of the existing Al Bilal Mosque and subsequent erection of a new, purpose built, Islamic community centre. The building is located on the north-east side of Bury Old Road, Prestwich approximately 2km southeast of Prestwich town centre.
2. This Technical Note has been prepared to address the parking demand associated with the application site.

Background

3. A pre-application enquiry for the proposed development was submitted to Bury Council in 2023 (planning reference 02891E).
4. The description of the development is as follows:

“Demolition of existing mosque and Islamic Centre and proposal for the erection of replacement mosque/Islamic Centre (Class F1(f)).”

5. Bury Council, reviewed the pre-application submission and provided a consultation response dated 4th December 2023, a copy of which is presented in **Appendix A**. A summary of the issues raised by the Council are presented below:
 - *In terms of our SPD11 and levels of parking – 1 space per 5sqm is advised for a prayer hall. The proposed prayer room/s would provide 217 sqm equating to 43 parking spaces. 20 spaces are proposed so the provision would be significantly lower. This will need to be justified.*
 - *It is recognised that the site is in a high access area, with access to public transport and where some members would walk. It is understood that the site and people arriving at prayer times by car would be managed by the committee and a caretaker on site to organise marshalling of the car park.*

- *From our pre-app meeting it was also understood that not all members would attend the same meeting in the day so it would be helpful to have an understanding of what times are currently the more popular in attendance levels and if this same pattern would continue.*
- *Appendix D of the TA states there is parking available on the Community Sports Centre Car Park off Bury New Road (40 spaces) – is there an agreement with this car park? Where is this and how far away is it and what is the likelihood people would park and walk? If this provision is to be formally secured, it may require a s106 legal agreement to secure this additional provision as part of a planning permission.*
- *The TA states at 5.33 that prayers would be held 5 x per day. Is this correct or is the prayer day a Friday only.*
- *At point 4.28 of the TA it is stated - For the majority of prayer times car parking is not expected to occur on local streets. For other busier prayers, parking on the local streets is expected to be minimal and the short duration of waiting and parking is not expected to create any highway network or highway safety issue. This is somewhat uncertain and non-committal as we received objections to the previous planning application prior to it being withdrawn which raised issues of parking and problems of parking on nearby streets. The TA states that following a survey, there are between 134-242 parking spaces on nearby streets. Section 6.18 of the TA states - The increase in parking demand for the extra floor area for the prayer hall can be accommodated within the proposed off-street parking provision and the spaces identified in the parking survey without creating any highway operational or highway safety issues. On street parking should not be relied on to make a development acceptable. It also suggests that there would be a heavy reliance on the street to park.*
- *In terms of the community use to provide educational facilities, these would appear to take place at different times to the prayer meetings (?) and for the numbers proposed to attend the educational facility the parking could be acceptable (this just needs to be made clear in any application submission).*

6. This Technical Note has been produced in accordance with Bury Council's pre-application comments.

Prayers

7. The mosque holds daily prayers, five times during the day with the busiest prayers typically occurring at Friday lunchtime.
8. Other prayers throughout the week / day have fewer attendees as can be seen in **Table 1** below:

Table 1 – Times of Daily Prayer on a Typical Weekday

Prayer	Time	No. of Attendees
Fajar	Before sunrise - 7am winter / 5 am summer	10-15 people
Zuhur	Early noon - 1pm winter / 1.45 pm summer	10-15 people
Asr	late noon - 3pm winter / 6pm summer	10-15 people
Maghrib	sunset - 4.30pm winter /9pm summer	15-20 people
Isha	evening time - 7.45pm winter /summer 11pm	20-25 people

9. As can be seen above, there would be more than sufficient parking spaces available for the daily prayers given that a number of attendees will travel sustainably to the mosque.

Educational Facilities

10. At present, there is a single spacious classroom which provides education to children between 1700-1900 Monday to Friday. The proposals are to establish four separate classrooms within the new building to facilitate undisturbed classes.
11. There will be 10-12 students per class, totalling 40-48 students. There is no change in the number of children attending the madrassa and the classes are already operating, therefore no change in parking for the madrassa is deemed necessary.
12. As is the current practice, parents will drop off their children outside the mosque without the need for parking. Additionally, marshals will be available to assist in the car park during these periods if required.

Baseline Parking Survey

13. A parking survey was undertaken on Friday 1st March 2024 between 11.30 and 14.00 in the following locations: the access to the mosque (six spaces), the car park in front of the mosque (11 spaces) and Brooklands Public Car Park (21 spaces).
14. To note, on a Friday during the mosques busiest period, volunteers from the mosque actively marshal the car parks and are therefore able to increase parking numbers at both the access to the mosque and the mosque car park. As attendees are at the mosque for the same period of time, some cars are positioned to block others to increase overall parking availability. This approach enables eight cars to be parked at the mosque access and 16 cars to be parked in the mosque car park.
15. The recent parking survey results show that on a Friday which is the busiest time for the mosque, the six parking spaces at the access to the mosque were only fully occupied between 12.00 and

13.30. Similarly, the car park in front of the mosque was fully occupied between 12.30 and 13.30 with vacant spaces outside of this time period. The Brooklands public car park was fully occupied at 12.30 until 13.30. See [Appendix B](#) for the survey results as well as the locations of the car parks mentioned.

16. The recent car parking survey results demonstrate that the car parks in the vicinity of the mosque are fully occupied between 12.30 and 13.30 on a Friday lunchtime only, with parking provision outstripping demand for the remainder of the week. This time is the busiest time for the mosque and outside the Friday lunchtime prayers, the number of visitors is much lower.
17. The community sports centre car park off Bury New Road has not been included in the parking surveys as there is no agreement in place between the mosque and the community sports centre.

Parking

18. The number of existing car parking spaces totals 17 official spaces; six spaces at the access to the mosque and 11 spaces in front of the mosque. These numbers can however be increased during bury periods (Friday lunchtime) as marshals actively oversee the car park, strategically managing it to maximise parking capacity. This involves employing a method where some cars are positioned to block others, thereby increasing overall parking availability.
19. The proposed development will provide a total of 20 parking spaces which is an increase of three parking spaces when compared with the current provision, as can be seen on the site layout plan in [Appendix C](#).
20. Bury Council's parking standards are set out in the *Development Control Policy Guidance Note 11 – Parking Standards in Bury*, dated May 2007.
21. The standards state that the maximum standards for car parking provision at developments such as a public hall or place of worship is 1 space per 5 sqm of public floor area. A critical point in the consideration of the proposals against the prevailing standards, is that these are maximum standards, not minimum standards. Therefore, all developments should come forward with proposed levels of parking below the maximum, unless in situations where specific circumstances support a need to provide more.
22. The proposed floor area of the prayer hall is approximately 200sqm, therefore maximum of 43 parking spaces could be provided to accommodate the demands of the facility in line with Bury Council's parking standards. The pre-app response from Bury appears to treat this figure as an absolute requirement, which is not appropriate for application of maximum parking standards.

Indeed, the very decision to adopt maximum, rather than minimum, standards is itself a reflection of the expectation of providing lower levels of parking where it is warranted.

23. Furthermore, we note that Bury's parking standards are now very historical, having been adopted in 2007. This means the standards are 17 years old and predate the 2008 financial crash and 2020 Covid Pandemic, both of which have had significant and lasting impacts on people's travel habits. Over the past 17 years there have also been significant changes in transport policy, moves to encourage sustainable travel, declarations of climate emergency and commitments to achieve Net Zero at all levels of Government and within private organisations.
24. It is helpful that the parking standards are a Maximum but we are concerned by Bury Council's supposed application of them as an absolute target, particularly in the context of the significant changes in travel behaviour which have occurred since they were adopted.
25. Aside from these observations, we find that the proposed development does meet with Bury Council's standards and should be considered acceptable for the following reasons:
 - Accessibility to the proposed Al Bilal Islamic Mosque has been examined and we conclude that the site is accessible by sustainable transport, this has clearly been agreed by Bury in their Pre-App response. The mosque is well located for access by public transport, walking and cycling and a number of people travelling to the building are expected to do so using sustainable travel, particularly walking. Bury Council recognise that the site is in a high access area.
 - The latest 2021 Census data, as illustrated by DataShine Census, shows that the area around the mosque in which the religion is stated as 'Muslim' also has a low car ownership level. As the mosque is in a highly accessible area, attendees of the mosque are therefore more likely to travel by sustainable modes. See [Appendix D](#) for Census outputs.
 - Parking is expected to be short in duration and not anticipated to create a severe network impact or an unacceptable highway impact. For the majority of prayer times, car parking is not expected to occur on local streets (see [Table 1](#) above). For the Friday lunchtime prayers (11.30 -14.00), parking on the local streets is expected to be minimal and the short duration of waiting and parking is not expected to create any highway network or highway safety issue.
 - People arriving at prayer times by car would be managed by the committee and a caretaker on site to organise marshalling of the car park.

- A parking survey was undertaken by Amni Transportation in February 2023 to assess the parking demands on the streets and car parks near the application site. The surveys were based on streets within 300m radius (maximum 8 minute walking distance) of the site and undertaken at peak prayer times on a Friday lunchtime (11.30 -14.00).
- The analysis found that there was between 134 and 242 on-street parking spaces available during the selected survey period. On-street parking has more than enough capacity to accommodate the level of parking that would be required to achieve the maximum parking demand implied by the parking standard when combined with the on-site spaces.

Conclusion

26. SCP have been appointed by Masjid E Bilal (Islamic Centre) to provide transport planning consultancy services in support of the demolition of the existing Al Bilal Mosque and subsequent erection of a new, purpose built, Islamic community centre.
27. The proposed development will provide a total of 20 parking spaces which is an increase of three parking spaces when compared to the current on site provision.
28. Although the floor area of the new mosque will increase from what is currently on site, its purpose and function will align with the existing building. The intended capacity and number of attendees will remain constant, and the parking provision will increase from 17 to 20 spaces, the proposals are therefore providing a betterment.
29. For the majority of prayer times, car parking is not expected to occur on local streets. For other busier prayers (Friday lunchtime 11.30 -14.00), parking on the local streets is expected to be minimal and be accommodated. The short duration of waiting and parking is not expected to create any highway network or highway safety issue.
30. People arriving at prayer times by car would be managed by the committee and a caretaker on site to organise marshalling of the car park.
31. The number of people attending the mosque for prayers or education will not increase, a new building is proposed to enable a more fit for purpose facility.

32. During the busiest Friday lunchtime prayers, there may be a need for on street parking between 12.30 and 13.30, however, the parking surveys have shown that there is more than sufficient capacity in the immediate vicinity of the mosque to cater for this demand.
33. Bury Council's parking standards are set as maximum parking standards, consequently, the development does not need to meet these maximums; the proposals therefore, are in line with the standards. If these parking standards are interpreted by Bury Council as the demand, the proposals provide 20 parking spaces on site and the overspill onto the neighbouring streets and public car parking areas more than caters for 23 more spaces. In context, the site is in a highly sustainable location for walking and cycling, with a large Muslim population and a low car ownership level within that population.
34. This planning application should not be refused on highway grounds as the above evidence provides sufficient evidence there will not be an impact in capacity or safety terms based.

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APPENDIX A

From: Umar Faruque <umar@lumitekton.com>
Sent: 15 January 2024 12:10
To: Rob Holloway
Subject: Email 2 - Second submission - Pre App Planning Advice - AL BILAL MOSQUE
Attachments: LU281 - P04 - Existing plans.pdf; LU281 - P05B - Proposed Site Plan.pdf; LU281 - P01A - Site Plans.pdf; LU281 - P03 - Site sections.pdf; LU281 - P02 - Existing Site Plan.pdf; LU281 - P06A - Proposed drawings.pdf; LU281 - P07B - Proposed Site sections.pdf; LU281 - P08 - Proposed Elevations.pdf; Pre App Statement - Aug 2023 - A.pdf; DocPreAppValidation.pdf; Image (4).pdf; Image (5).pdf; Image (3).pdf; Image (2).pdf; Image (1).pdf; Image (6).pdf

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Main changes with this scheme:

1. Building position tucked towards NW boundary
2. Use of existing point of entry/ exit into site. Removal of one way system
3. Red outline changed to include public point of entry
4. Parking provided along SE boundary

Submission, Comments below and feedback attached.

- In terms of the level of parking proposed, as I said in our meeting, this will need to be justified and a management plan produced for your application.
- I have discussed the proposals with my highway colleague and I also wanted to discuss the proposals in terms of the actual building again with the planning team before I provided a response.

On the highway and parking matters first. There are a number of points in the Transport Statement which will need to be clarified and in considering an application we will need some further information. For ease of reference I have bullet pointed our observations together with some points which will need to be addressed.

- In terms of our SPD11 and levels of parking – 1 space per 5sqm is advised for a prayer hall. The proposed prayer room/s would provide 217 sqm equating to 43 parking spaces. 20 spaces are proposed so the provision would be significantly lower. This will need to be justified.
- It is recognised that the site is in a high access area, with access to public transport and where some members would walk. It is understood that the site and people arriving at prayer times by car would be managed by the committee and a caretaker on site to organise marshalling of the car park.
- From our pre-app meeting it was also understood that not all members would attend the same meeting in the day so it would be helpful to have an understanding of what times are currently the more popular in attendance levels and if this same pattern would continue.
- Appendix D of the TA states there is parking available on the Community Sports Centre Car Park off Bury New Road (40 spaces) – is there an agreement with this car park? Where is this and how far away is it and what is the likelihood people would park and walk? If this provision is to be formally

secured, it may require a s106 legal agreement to secure this additional provision as part of a planning permission.

- The TA states at 5.33 that prayers would be held 5 x per day. Is this correct or is the prayer day a Friday only.
- At point 4.28 of the TA it is stated - *For the **majority of prayer times** **car parking is not expected to occur on local streets**. For other busier prayers, **parking on the local streets is expected to be minimal** and the short duration of waiting and parking **is not expected** to create any highway network or highway safety issue.* This is somewhat uncertain and non-committal as we received objections to the previous planning application prior to it being withdrawn which raised issues of parking and problems of parking on nearby streets. The TA states that following a survey, there are between 134-242 parking spaces on nearby streets. Section 6.18 of the TA states - *The increase in parking demand for the extra floor area for the prayer hall can be accommodated within the proposed off-street parking provision and the spaces identified in the parking survey without creating any highway operational or highway safety issues.* On street parking should not be relied on to make a development acceptable. It also suggests that there would be a heavy reliance on the street to park.
- In terms of the community use to provide educational facilities, these would appear to take place at different times to the prayer meetings (?) and for the numbers proposed to attend the educational facility the parking could be acceptable (this just needs to be made clear in any application submission).

All in all, there is still some work to do on justifying or clarifying the proposed level of parking, how it would be managed, how many members could be attending the site at any one time and if there is the potential to secure off site parking provision. The above points should hopefully direct you to what would need to be included in a planning application submission.

I have also discussed the contents of your email of 26/11/23 and the pre-app proposals at length with the planning team and thought it would be useful for you to have our response on this too.

The example you have referred to is a different setting, context and in any event dates back to almost 20 years ago. The planning landscape has changed, as have planning policies and the introduction of the Design Guide .

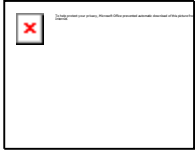
In terms of this proposal, we would continue to advise that the building at the front is scaled down to at least 2-storey at the front, and also consider setting the footprint further back to provide a space and set back from the street. A civic building needs space around it for people to congregate and spill out from and in any event, as we have already fed back, the scale and massing of a 3-storey building very close to the site frontage would, in plain terms, just be too much within the context and character of the area.

I hope the above is helpful and I will send the remainder of the pre-app consultee comments by next week.

Umar Faruque BA(Hons),P.G.Dip
Architectural Consultant

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APPENDIX B

Parking Survey

Time	Location of Parking Spaces		
	1. Access to Mosque (6 spaces)	2. Car park at mosque (11 spaces)	3. Brooklands Public car park (off mosque access road) (21 spaces)
1130	2 vacant / 4 occupied	fully vacant	19 occupied / 2 vacant
1200	full	10 occupied / 1 vacant	20 occupied / disabled space vacant
1230	full	16 cars	full
1300	4 left / 4 re-occupied	16 left / 11 re-occupied	2 left / 2 re-occupied
1330	4 left / 4 re-occupied	16 left / 11 re-occupied	2 left / 2 re-occupied
1400	4 left / 2 vacant	5 left / 6 vacant	5 left / 16 vacant

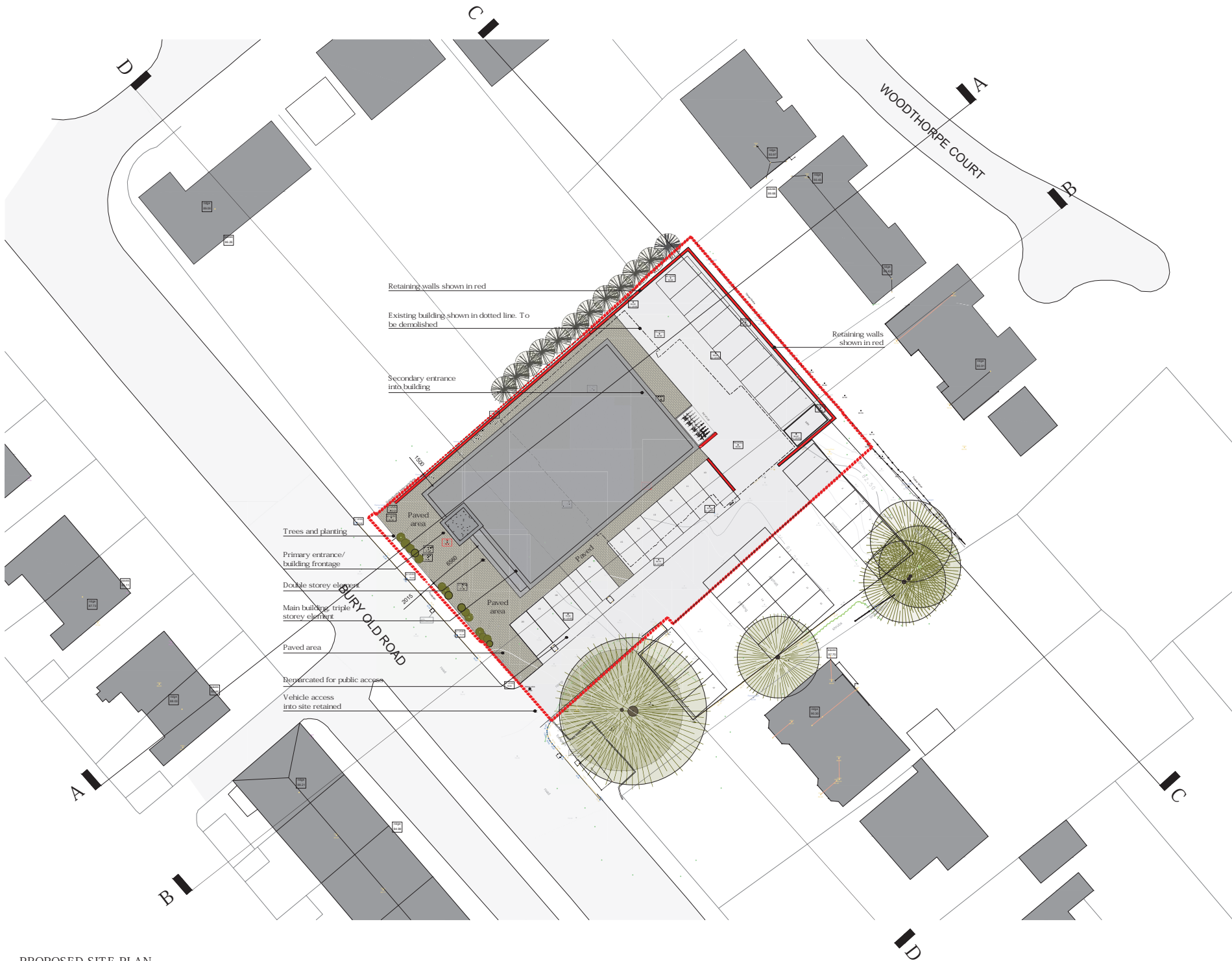
** Number of available parking spaces

Undertaken Friday 1st March 2024



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APPENDIX C



PROPOSED SITE PLAN
1:200

LUM

LUMITEKTON

LU281 - P05E

Revisions

revision	Date	Comments
A	22.07.23	Building repositioned Parking amended Exit lane removed Adjacent levels shown
B	17.08.23	Levels amended
C	22.11.23	Red line amended
D	24.11.23	Further detail clarified
E	22.12.23	Building moved back and failed

N

W

E

S

Job Title

Demolition of existing Al-Bital Mosque and erection of new purpose built Islamic Community Centre

Site Address

Al Bital Islamic Centre
52 Bury Old Rd
Prestwich
M25 0ER

Drawing Title

Proposed Site Plan

Scale

1:200 @ A1

Date

07.10.22

Drawn

at

A. 275a Upper Brook St
Manchester
M13 0UR
T. 07804401574
E. info@lumitekton.com

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APPENDIX D

