



THE DATA COLLECTION SPECIALISTS

**56617 – Kurdish Community
and Tuition Centre**

**Planning Statement
February 2024**

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Data Quality Assurance

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Data Quality Assurance

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1. Introduction

The Kurdish Community and Tuition Centre of Rochdale has recently purchased the pair of properties at 134 and 136 Drake Street, Rochdale, OL16 1PS to meet their need for a community centre for their local residents.

CTS Traffic and Transportation were appointed by the Kurdish Community and Tuition Centre of Rochdale to produce a Planning Statement to support the development.

This Planning Statement is provided to explain and support the proposal to provide for their present needs at this site. It forms one of a suite of three documents related to this planning proposal, including a Transport Statement and a Heritage Assessment. This Planning Statement and the Heritage Assessment draw information from a previous application for the same site which was not implemented.

The building is two stories high and formed of two separate elements of a four-unit terraced property. It has been primarily used as offices and a tuition centre, with previous use of one part being a Doctor surgery. The building is now vacant and was proposed to see the upstairs of both units being modified to three self-contained apartments (planning permission ref 23-01004-FUL) but this has not been taken forward any further.

The aim is to use the pair of buildings to meet local community need for the extensive Kurdish Community and Tuition Centre in the area. Delivery of this scheme will make a positive change to the area.

2. Planning Policy Background

This Planning Statement, together with the Heritage Statement, Transport Statement, site, floor and elevation plans makes reference to the land use, constraints, policies, guidance and potential issues for this proposal. This Statement addresses these matters.

Drake Street will soon be the heart of the developing rebalancing of the town centre focussed on the Drake Street Heritage Action Zone which is now fully under construction on the opposite side of Drake Street. That site provides high quality modern housing making the previous redevelopment to accommodation no longer appropriate.

The overarching national guidance is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) last revised on 19th December 2023. It continues to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and its support, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. With reference to the development under consideration in this specific proposal, chapter 8 discusses the promotion of healthy and safe communities. This chapter encourages planning decisions aiming to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, including provision for places of cultural buildings. Paragraph 99 references the provision for education.

In NPPF para 125 “local planning authorities ... should take a proactive role in identifying and helping bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs ... including suitable sites on brownfield...”. Para 135 (f) encourages creation of places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users”.

NPPF para 115 states “development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.” Para 116 continues: “within this context, applications for development should...give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements..and so far as possible facilitate access to high quality public transport”...”address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility””create places that are safe, secure and attractive” ... and “enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles..”

Local Planning Policies

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Rochdale’s Core Strategy was adopted in October 2016 and is the key Development Plan Document. It replaces significant elements of the existing Unitary Development Plan as the document that sets out the long-term strategic policies for Rochdale’s future development and will form the framework that planning applications will be assessed against. The Core Strategy seeks to deliver sustainable development and growth in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It aims to increase investment in the Borough and to make it a more prosperous place by 2028. The Core Strategy will have a major role in guiding the regeneration of the borough, building on the investment that has already taken place in some areas and identifying where to focus on next.

It looks to build on the borough's assets, heritage and identity and on its connections and relationships with neighbouring towns. In particular, the borough needs. The following Local Plan policies have relevance to the proposal:

DM1	GENERAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS
P3	IMPROVING DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT
E1	ESTABLISHING THRIVING TOWN, DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES
C2	FOCUSSING ON REGENERATION AREAS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH CORRIDORS / AREAS
C7	DELIVERING EDUCATION FACILITIES
C8	IMPROVING COMMUNITY, SPORT, LEISURE AND CULTURAL FACILITIES
G9	REDUCING THE IMPACT OF POLLUTION
T2	IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

Saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies:

G/D/1	DEFINED URBAN AREA
G/S/1	TOWN CENTRES
(R/3)	PHYSICAL REGENERATION AREA

The R/3 policy now appears to have been superceded by the establishment of the Rochdale Drake Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ). This centres on this historic route from the railway station to the Town Hall. Rebalancing the town centre will introduce new uses for sites around Drake Street, particularly residential and leisure, to ensure it is an attractive place to live, work, play and visit. Partners involved are the Borough Council, the Cooperative Heritage Trust, The Cooperative College, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, Link4Life and the Rochdale Development Agency. The HAZ aims to galvanize property owners and partners so this historic gateway will become a pioneering and affordable area for town centre living. The area's new focus will be the towns emerging leisure and cultural heritage sector.

3. Site and Surroundings

The application relates to an end terrace building fronting Drake Street with its side elevation facing Moore Street. It is two storeys high and 80m outside the Rochdale Town Centre formal boundary and adjacent to the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area, and to the Drake Street Heritage Action Zone. Current provision gives five parking spaces to the rear, still signed for use by those visiting the Surgery.

The neighbouring terraces along Drake Street are occupied by a variety of shops, commercial and social properties at ground floor. The building is located near to a bus stop in both directions and towards the Drake Street / Milnrow Road major road intersection. At the present time the opposite side of Drake Street is a major construction zone related to the Heritage Action Zone.

The building dates from the late 19th Century providing a wide double frontage shopfront. The first floor consists of vertical windows with stone heads and cills. Access is provided to 136 from Drake Street and to 134 from two entrances on Moore Street. Internally there are some connections between the two separate buildings. The first floor and side elevation have been cream rendered.

The site is in a sustainable location with good service by buses (albeit no tram stop although the route passes by), and well related to an adequate range of existing services and facilities within a short walking distance using good quality pavement. The site is within a close-knit urban area with servicing provided principally from the rear.

All the frontages on this side of Drake Street north and south of Moore Street are commercial properties at ground level. However, to the south, 130 is the 'Nigerian Community Centre' and 114 is the Navigation Inn (currently closed). Along Moore Street on the corner with Great George Street is the 'Al-Abbas Institute'. This suggests the area does have a number of community uses fitted within the fabric of both commercial along Drake Street and residential immediately behind the frontage.

The property opposite the development, 132, was until recently the Alcohol and Drug Service of Rochdale but this property is currently proposed for redevelopment as housing. The large plot of land opposite the site, across Drake Street, is under redevelopment. This was formerly part of a retail park that contained Wynsor's, Focus and MFI and which was cleared around 2013 at the time the tram extension was put in place. Proposals are in place to add over 200 homes including 142 apartments on this site providing an active frontage on the other side of Drake Street which has not been present for many years, adding to the vibrance of this area.

4. Involvement

This Planning Statement provides reasoned justification for the proposal using local and national planning policy and guidance. Amenity, design, heritage and highway safety are considered below alongside more detail in the Heritage and Transport statements also provided.

5. Planning History

The check on planning history identified (most recent to oldest):

Ref 22/01532/FUL Change of use of first floor from office space to 3 no. self-contained apartments. Single storey rear extension to ground floor offices. 134-136 Drake Street. Validated Mon 23 Jan 2023 and decided.

Ref 01/D39284 New Shop Front and Alterations to External Elevations 134-140 Drake Street. Validated Thu 20 Sep 2001 and decided.

Ref 94/D31392 External Alterations to Building 134 Drake Street. Validated Fri 28 Oct 1994 with status unknown.

Ref 94/D30892 Change of Use from Former Offices to Doctors Surgery 134 Drake Street. Validated Fri 24 Jun 1994 and decided.

Ref 06/D47062 Two Storey Rear Extension to Office 136 Drake Street. Validated Thu 30 Mar 2006 and decided.

Ref 93/D30236 Two Storey Rear Extension to Building 136 Drake Street. Validate 14 Dec 1993 and decided.

6. Proposed development

The specific development proposed in this application covers the building being transformed into a community centre for the Kurdish community which is based in housing around this area. The proposed uses are shown below:

Activity	Time	Approx no. attending	Days
Pre-dawn prayers	varies	30	Mon – Sun
Community Support	12:00 to 14:00	30	Thursdays
Mid-day prayers	13:00	30	Sat – Thurs
Community Events	14:00 to 15:30	100	Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, when required
Friday prayers	13:00	100	Fridays
Library sessions	15:30 to 17:30	40	Tuesdays and Thursdays
Late afternoon prayers	varies	25	Mon – Sun
Youth Classes 1	16:45 – 18:45	40	Mon – Sun
Youth Classes 2	18:45 – 19:45	40	Mon – Sun
Sunset prayers	Varies	10	Mon – Sun
Post sunset prayers	Varies	10	Mon – Sun
Eid prayers	08:30	150	Twice per year

At the present time, the community has no specific location they are able to meet together. This opportunity is much needed and seeks to enhance the local community as well as providing a general place for others to use.

The proposals see the basement storage areas modified to provide two separate toilet areas. One provides six WC and the other five, with associated washing facilities.

The current ground floor provides nine various sized offices and two separate toilets. The development will add the extension as in the previous planning permission to 136 and remove two chimneys that are no longer in use. This will create a larger area within 136 which will be used as a lounge and tea room / dining area. The remaining office that was within 136 will be changed to a refreshment area.

The two front offices in 134 will be combined to provide a staff room. The next office will become a library. The two toilets at this level will remain. The next office to the rear will be converted into a lobby, with the final office retained as office provision for administrative uses.

The first floor will see the two front offices in 136 merged to provide the male prayer area. The two toilets and storage area will be amended to take access from 134 and provide one classroom. The other office in 136 to the rear will also become a classroom. Upstairs in 134, the three front offices and corridor will be combined to form a female prayer area. The two WC will be retained, with the rear two offices modified to be classrooms

Overall, this will provide a facility with four classrooms, two prayer rooms, an administrative office and staff room, a tea/dining room and sufficient toilet and washing facilities for the number of people expected. It should be noted that the pupils being educated specifically need washing facilities as they will be taught to handle the Quran for which they need to have clean hands.

To the rear, the five current parking spaces will be retained. In addition, two further spaces will be made available to the rear of 136 in tandem to the southernmost two spaces. These will be reserved for staff who would always arrive before and leave after any general arrivals in the other spaces. The area to the rear would also provide bin storage and covered cycle storage.

7. Planning Assessment

Policy E1 of the Council's Core Strategy states 'We will focus retail leisure, cultural, office, residential and other development to promote the viability and vitality of the boroughs town centres'. With the application on the edge of Rochdale Town Centre and near the Heritage Action Zone this location is suitable for this development.

Policy C1 of the Core Strategy seeks to maximise the potential of previously developed sites, ensuring sites are sustainable and have good access to local services, facilities, green infrastructure, jobs, schools and public transport. Policy C3 also focusses on sustainable sites.

The site is sustainably located within the local centre of Drake Street and on the fringe but outside the town centre, in a regeneration area with easy access to a range of local facilities. A key factor is re-using what is currently an empty and disused property directly opposite the proposed new development of over 200 homes. It will provide a much needed community focus point and reduce the need for travel to other more distant sites for cultural activity and for education of its youth.

Any impact on residential amenity by reason of noise or other nuisance would be minor given its location adjacent to other noise generating uses and the general make-up and character of the area which in itself produces a level of noise. No noise impact assessment is required.

The proposed extension to the rear is simple in form and design, and proportionate to the area and overall size of the site. It was accepted in the recent planning application for conversion to upstairs apartments. This was principally because large, tall extensions of buildings and structures are already located on various sections of Drake Street.

The development will provide adequate and carefully designed storage for bins and recycling, to the rear of the building, readily accessible to site users but away from public vantage points.

NPPF paragraph 48 encourages local authorities bringing back into use buildings that are presently vacant. This proposal assists the authority in doing so and providing a viable and sustainable usage for the site. The area is mixed use with increasing levels of housing arriving soon.

In regards to the development providing adequate space around buildings, there is no change to the frontage at all. The north western rear elevation will face the residential properties on the opposite side of Drake Street at a distance of 27m, as accepted in the apartment application. The 11m distance from windows in the north eastern side would also be acceptable in such close-knit central locations where longer distances cannot be achieved.

Policy P3 and para 130 of the NPPF encourage high standards of design and buildings that function well. The extension will use sympathetic materials and to design that complements the current building.

8. Conclusions

This Planning Statement has demonstrated the proposed development can be carried out in full compliance with the Council's policies in the adopted Local Plan, including SPD's and the latest NPPF. The development would provide good quality social facilities bringing a positive contribution to Drake Street and the new developments opposite. It also brings a vacant property to a viable and sustainable use.

Given the above, this proposal should be supported in full by the Council.