



TRAFFIC + TRANSPORTATION

THE DATA COLLECTION SPECIALISTS

**56617 – Kurdish Community
and
Tuition Centre**

**Transport Statement
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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 Transport Statement to document the potential impact of the development on local traffic conditions.

This Transport 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 Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Assessment (both developed from a recent accepted alternative proposal for this site under application reference 22/01532/FUL).

2. Planning Policy Background

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 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 superseded 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. Description of area

Drake Street is a principally commercial street leading from the town centre of Rochdale at its junction with South Parade and Smith Street right through to the west where it joins the A58 north-south route. It forms the A640 between the A58 and Milnrow Road. It is a 30mph route revised when the tram route was taken into the town centre.

At the point of the proposed development, the road has three lanes, one inbound and two outbound. The two outbound lanes split just to the east with one lane continuing to the A58 and the furthest (nearside) lane providing a route towards the local railway station. The two track tramway is segregated from the roadway at this point. There is a 1m pavement both sides of the road with a 0.5m median strip between the tramway and roadway.

The development is on the corner with Moore Street. This street is one way towards Drake Street and is a 20mph road. There is a wide loading bay on the far side of this street from the development and a marked 'Turn Left' with the right turn out banned at its junction with Drake Street.

Behind the property, and providing rear access and a parking area, is Back Drake Street which runs parallel to Drake Street in both directions from Moore Street.

Immediately adjacent to the property is a cycle lane providing a contra-flow cycle provision away from Drake Street.

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.

The proposed development has long been solicitors / property developer at the main Drake Street frontage, a doctors surgery to the rear (to 2018) and vacant upstairs for an extended period, having at some point been used for office accommodation. It also has a pair of basements, used for storage.

Planning permission, reference 23-01004-FUL was granted on 23rd January 2023 for change of use of the first floor from office space to three self-contained apartments including a single storey rear extension to the ground floor offices. However, this was not taken forward further.

Parking Provision

Drake Street has no parking provision at all on the section between the two major junctions of Milnrow Road to the north and Maclure Road to the south. Both sides of the road have double yellow lines throughout. The exceptions are a loading bay and bus stop on the same side as the development to the north and a bus stop in each direction nearby.

The section of Moore Street between Drake Street and Back Drake Street provides a small loading only area on the opposite side from the property. In both directions away from Moore Street Back Drake Street is too narrow to allow parking, although on the southern side (same side as the property) vehicles do park either side but mainly on the pavement.

On the opposite corner from the development there is a sixteen space open area marked for parking although it is not clear if this area is privately owned and enforced or not. This will be lost if the development of 132 goes ahead.

There is an area for five cars directly behind the property backing onto Back Drake Street, with a sign saying it is for use of the Surgery only.

Beyond Back Drake Street Moore Street has 'one hour – no return within one hour' parking on the opposite side of the road to the development.

There is further unrestricted parking in Great George Street to the north off Moore Street. The southern extension of Great George Street is St Chad's Close, which has resident permit holder parking only servicing the more recent housing development there.

Public Transport

The nearest pair of bus stops are 40m to the north (northbound, to Rochdale stop) and 70m to the north (southbound stop towards Manchester). Both have half bus shelters and protective road markings, but not any bus layby. They serve the 17/17A service which runs every ten minutes Monday to Friday daytime, every 15 minutes on Saturdays and half hourly evenings and Sundays. It runs via Castleton and Middleton. It is also serviced by the 471 bus from Rochdale to Heywood, Bury and Bolton. It provides five buses per hour daytimes Monday to Saturday, a half hourly service at night and three buses per hour during Sunday daytimes.

Although the Metrolink tram route from Rochdale to Manchester passes the site, providing five trams per hour, the nearest stops are at the terminus (central Rochdale, a 2 minute drive, 5 minute cycle or 8 minute walk) or Rochdale Station (2 minute drive, 5 minute walk or 2 minute cycle).

4. 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	10	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 proposed redevelopment sees 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 communal hall. The remaining office that was within 136 will be changed to a dining area. An office formerly accessed only from 136 will be modified to take access from the dining area to provide a kitchen.

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 but be combined to provide a disabled WC. The next office to the rear will be converted into a lobby, with the final office retained as office / reception provision for administrative uses.

The first floor will see the two front offices and lobby in 136 modified to provide a male communal space of 32.6m² and a smaller male prayer area of 12.7m². The two toilets and storage area, together with an office formerly part of 134 will be amended to take access from 134 and provide one tuition class.

Upstairs in 134, the three front offices and corridor will be combined to form a female communal space of 41.1m² with a small, 4.8m² prayer area. The two WC will be retained, with the rear two offices merged to provide on tuition class.

Overall, this will provide a facility with two tuition classes, two prayer rooms, three communal rooms, an administrative office and staff room, a dining room with kitchen 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, three further spaces will be made available to the rear of 136 in tandem to the southernmost two spaces. The tandem arrangement maximises spaces but means they need to be reserved for staff who would always arrive before and leave after any general arrivals in the other spaces. This should preclude any issues arising whereby people were not able to take their vehicles when needed by being obstructed by the other vehicle. In any event, only those within the building will be allowed to use any space.

The area to the rear would also provide bin storage and covered cycle storage, separated from each other to ensure high usage of the cycle spaces without any interference from being near to the bins.

Expected usage and likely mode choice

The site has been chosen for its proximity to many of those in the local Kurdish community. It is expected that a very high number of those attending will do so on foot given the proximity to their homes or workplaces.

As noted above, the peak usage of the site will be by around 100 persons for Friday prayers at around 13:00. The next busiest usage will be the 50 arrivals and departures occurring for the two evening young people's classes. These will be for those under the age of 16 who are therefore unable to drive themselves and will also generally walk to the site, or be brought by parents or siblings.

5. Transport Impact

Accessibility from home to the site very strongly favours walking to the site. Expected walking times will generally be very competitive meaning that there is little likelihood that the car would even be considered. There is also relatively little nearby car parking, further discouraging any thought of travel by car unless essential (e.g. for those with disabilities).

As already noted, car journey times are for the journey only and would be inflated further by needing to enter and leave the vehicle, further strengthening the walk mode preferences.

Further, any impacts will only be for very short periods, in the run up to Friday prayers (12:30 to 13:00) and after (from 13:30 to 12:45), from 16:30 to 16:45, between 18:30 and 18:45 and from 19:45 to 20:00 when tuition was occurring.

Further, future usage will by the nature of the provision, encourage more travel by bicycle to the classes which could reduce the small level of drop-offs further.

The design of the building means that different areas of the building are designed for specific use with no planned dual usage of rooms. For example, the education rooms will never be used at the same time as Friday prayers, or vice versa. The staff room would be used before and after Friday prayers and before and after the education classes. The administrative office would be used during the week, but very rarely at the same time as Friday prayers as all occupants would be engaged in prayer at that time.

Further, the focus is to encourage all to pray together in the two prayer rooms to engender community spirit. The special nature of the prayer areas has been protected by them being kept relatively small and clearly separate from the two nearby communal areas.

6. Conclusions

Future mode of travel to the all uses is highly likely to be principally walking. The site is therefore a very sustainable location. Principal provision of car parking is for staff and for those needing vehicular access for a range of reasons.

There is no reason this application should be refused on the basis of potential impact on local parking or traffic.