

APPLICATION NUMBER: 24/00982/FUL

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
24/00982/FUL	Bob Melling	27 th February 2025

Address: Mills Hill Baptist Church, Mills Hill Road, Middleton, M24 2FD

Proposal: Erection of a single-storey portacabin within the church grounds for a temporary period of two years to be used as a children's room.

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	N/A

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	N

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N/A

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RC

DATE: 05/03/25

SITE

The application relates to the site of Mills Hill Baptist Church, an attractive and locally important building constructed circa 1845, whose footprint occupies that of a traditional 'cross'. It is elevated approximately 2m above Mills Hill Road and located near to the junction with the A669 (Middleton Road) and Mills Hill Railway Station. The Church sits on a plateau that is contained by an attractive stone retaining wall with associated coping stones and black railings fixed atop and it is set adjacent to the rear of the footway on Mills Hill Road. The current access from the street is via a set of stone steps leading towards the front door or via a ramped access that was constructed pursuant to planning permission 11/D55003, whose entrance gate is located towards the south eastern corner of the site. The main entrance is further elevated on the building plinth and accessed via a further set of four steps at the external porch. There is a vehicular access track which runs along the west boundary and this is used for grounds maintenance vehicles.

The site is located within a Mixed Employment Zone as designated on the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map. There is a builder's merchant adjacent to the north of the Church and Sarsons Vinegar factory adjacent to the south. A hall associated with the Church is located directly opposite on the other side of Mills Hill Road but this area is situated within the jurisdiction of Oldham Council.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the erection of a modular building with a footprint of 7.3 metres by 2.8 metres and a height of approximately 2.85 metres. The building would be positioned towards the southern boundary of the site and would be set against the existing 2-3m tall hedge. Following a meeting with the Council, it was agreed that the north and east facing elevations of the proposed building would be wrapped in a dark green vinyl to reduce its visual prominence in views along Mills Hill Road.

Due to increasing costs and falling demand, the Church has sold the former church hall across Mills Hill Road to the east, therefore the proposed building would be used as a community facility for children attending church on Sunday mornings. The building is required for a temporary period of 2 years while planning permission is sought for the construction of a permanent extension to the rear of the Church.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2024
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

JP-P1	Sustainable Places
JP-P2	Heritage

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

C8	Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities
P2	Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3	Improving design of new development
T2	Improving accessibility
DM1	General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1	Defined Urban Area
EC/3	Mixed Employment Zones

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

13/00647/ADV	One internally illuminated sign fixed to existing front railings, two externally illuminated freestanding signs and two non-illuminated notice board signs located within curtilage of site – Granted STC (August 2013)
11/D55003	Installation Of New Path With Handrails To Provide Disabled Access To Church Including Removal Of Access Ramp From Rear Of Building – Granted STC (February 2012)
01/D38976	Construction Of Disabled Persons Access Ramp To Rear Of Church Building - Granted STC (August 2001)
82/D14198	Reconstruction And Alteration Work To Fire Demand Church - Granted STC (November 1982)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways and Engineering

No objections.

Conservation and Urban Design

Summary of discussions: The proposed building would result in less than substantial harm to the character of the street scene and the setting of an NDHA. However, the building is for a temporary period to provide an important community facility while permission is sought for a permanent extension to the rear of the Church. It was agreed that a dark green vinyl would be used on the north and east facing elevation to soften the visual appearance from Mills Hill Road.

Environmental Health – Noise

No objections.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to surrounding neighbours and a site notice posted in the vicinity. One objection has been received which states that the proposed siting for the building is outside of the applicants ownership. Following this objection amendments have been received to relocate the building to an area within the main church yard.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development

The application proposes development in association with the existing Mills Hill Baptist Church. CS Policy C8 is relevant to such an application and this establishes that the Council will support and promote the provision of improved community and cultural facilities.

Given the above the principle of providing a community facility is acceptable. An assessment is still however required into any other material matters, including heritage.

Heritage and Design

CS Policies DM1 and P3 require development proposals to demonstrate high quality design. CS Policy P2 requires development to protect and enhance character, landscape and heritage. In addition, PfE Policy JP-P2 explains that development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets will be considered having regard to the NPPF.

Paragraph 209 of the NPPF states: "The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

Mills Hill Baptist Church is considered to be locally important owing to its historic (it was constructed circa 1849) and attractive qualities, although it is located within a mixed employment zone adjacent to a number of industrial units.

It is considered that the proposal, by virtue of its design and siting, would result in a degree of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Church building. However, it is important that a balanced judgement is taken in order to determine whether the harm identified would warrant the refusal of planning permission.

The proposal is for a temporary modular building and it is important to note that the lifespan of the building can be controlled via a suitably worded planning condition. Following a meeting with the applicant, it was agreed that the timespan for the building would be reduced to two years. In addition, the applicant has confirmed that the funds are now available to begin the process of securing planning permission for a permanent extension to the rear of the Church.

Lastly, it is considered that the use of dark green vinyl to the elevations visible from Mills Hill Road would soften its visual impact against the backdrop of the boundary hedge. A condition is recommended to ensure an appropriate colour is used for the vinyl.

In light of the established facts and circumstances, it is considered that the public benefits and temporary nature of the proposal would outweigh any identified harm to the setting of the Church building. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would accord with CS Policies DM1, P2 and P3, PfE Policy JP-P2 and the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

The proposed development is located in a mixed employment zone and would not be adjacent to any residential development. Moreover, no concerns were raised by the Council's Environment Health Service. As such, it is not considered that the proposal

would have an adverse impact on residential amenity, in accordance with CS Policy DM1, PfE Policy JP-P1, the SPD and the NPPF.

Highways

The Council's Highways and Engineering Service has been consulted and raised no objections, confirming that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on road safety or highway capacity. As such, it is considered that the proposal would accord with CS Policies DM1 and T2 and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. This permission relates to the following plans:-

- Site Location Plan. Dwg. d503/01 rev C
- Existing Site Plan. Dwg. d503/02 rev B
- Proposed Site Plan. Dwg. d503/03 rev A
- Proposed Modular Building. Dwg. d503/04 rev D

and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these drawings hereby approved unless otherwise required by the conditions below.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan, the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The temporary building hereby approved shall be removed from the site and the land restored to its former condition in accordance with a scheme that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority on or before two years from the date of this decision.

Reason: In accordance with Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, as the structure is harmful to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset and is only justifiable on a temporary basis.

4. The materials used in the construction of the development hereby permitted shall be in accordance with drawing d503/04 rev D unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt this shall include a vinyl wrap in RAL 6005 to the north and east elevations.

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies P2, P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Procedure Statement

The Local Planning Authority worked proactively with the applicant to identify various solutions during the application process to ensure that the proposal comprised sustainable development and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and would accord with the development plan. These were incorporated into the scheme and/or have been secured by planning condition.

Report Author Bob Melling