

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0415
Location: GOLDEN MOSQUE, LOWER SHERIFF STREET,
ROCHDALE, OL12 6TG
Proposal: Four storey side extension and associated alterations to
existing boundary wall, bin storage and car parking
arrangements.
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application site relates to the Golden Mosque on the edge of Rochdale Town Centre. The current building was constructed following a grant of planning permission for a replacement mosque in 2006. The front elevation of the building is two storeys high and fronts Lower Sheriff Street. The east-facing side elevation of the building adjoins Cornfield Steps, which extend down between Lower Sheriff Street and Holland Street. The south-west facing elevation faces Holland Street and the gable end of 1 Holland Street. Due to the change in levels across the site, the rear section of the building is split over three levels with undercroft parking that is accessible from street level.

The site is located within the Defined Urban Boundary as set out under Policy G/D/1 of the UDP and is within Flood Zone 1 meaning the site has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. There are terraced dwellings positioned to the north and west of the site and blocks of high-rise flats to the south and east. A small industrial complex is positioned near the east of the site on Halliwell Street.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the erection of a four-storey side extension affixed to the southwest facing elevation fronting Holland Street to the south. The extension would occupy an area of hardstanding which is currently taken up by a shipping container/ temporary storage building and refuse storage. The existing external staircase is to be retained and falls outside of the development site. Split over four levels, the extension would provide additional floorspace to allow enhancements to the existing funeral services and community classrooms. The floor plans indicate the following general arrangement:

Basement Level (level access from Holland Street):

Under the open canopy of the existing mosque above, a new bin store area and provision for 16 car parking spaces are proposed. Within the basement-level extension, a pre-burial preparation room, viewing area, cadaver storage facility, and lift are also proposed.

Lower Ground Floor:

Provision of two new classrooms, a foyer, plant room, and lift access.

Ground Floor (level access from Lower Sheriff Street):

This level will accommodate a community hub, storage, lift access, and a new foyer with external access to the car park on Lower Sheriff Street. A total of five additional car parking spaces are proposed, including two accessible (disabled) bays.

First Floor:

A new library/lecture space is proposed, including lift access and a kitchen.

The proposed development will be of brick construction with a flat roof. The external elevations are designed to reflect the existing architectural style of the Golden Mosque and window patterns will similarly reflect the existing design.

RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

02/D40042 - Erection Of Replacement Mosque With 1 Integral Dwelling Unit, Associated Car Park, Closure/Diversion Of Footpath. Approved.

06/D47837 - Erection of Replacement Mosque with Associated Car Park (Part Retrospective). Approved.

11/D55045 - Application To Vary Condition 07 Of Planning Permission D47837 To Allow The Retention Of The Original Mosque Building Instead Of Its Demolition And Replacement With Nine Car Parking Spaces. Approved.

12/55988/FUL - Demolition existing mosque and erection of a new teaching community hub. Approved.

18/00560/FUL - Installation of an extension at second floor level in place of existing terrace and new external staircase on the side elevation facing Golden Mosque. Approved.

PREAPP/00102/25 - 3 Story extension on the right-hand side of the existing build, incorporating enhancements to the funeral services within the underground car park. In addition, the lower ground floor includes improved classroom layouts, completed by community halls on the ground and first floors. Advice Issued (11.12.2025).

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

National Design Guide (NDG)

Adopted Development Plan

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) 2024:

JP-S1: Sustainable Development

JP-P1: Sustainable Places

JP-P3: Cultural Facilities

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

SD1: Delivering sustainable development

DM1: General development requirements

SO2: Creating successful and healthy communities

C8: Improving community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities

SO3: Improving design, image and quality of place

P1: Improving image

P3: Improving design of new development

SO5: Improving accessibility and delivering sustainable transport

T2: Improving accessibility

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1: Defined Urban Area

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Guidelines and Standards for Residential Development (SPD) 2016.

PUBLICITY

Site Notice (x2): 04.07.2026

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: 22.06.2026

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Defined Urban Area as designated under the Proposals Map of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). New development, wherever possible and appropriate, should be concentrated within the urban area in order to support urban regeneration and to protect the countryside.

Policy C8 of the adopted Core Strategy (CS) sets out that the Council will support and promote the provision of better community, sport, leisure and cultural facilities and the Council will follow a sequential approach provided the facilities are of a type and scale appropriate to the size of the settlement, are accessible and support the Council's objectives. In this instance, of relevance is point b, which requires facilities serving towns to be located in or adjacent to town centres or local centres, or highly accessible locations.

Places for Everyone (PfE) Policy JP-P3 (Cultural Facilities) states that 'We will proactively develop and support cultural businesses and attractions in our cities and towns through a range of measures, where appropriate, including promoting new, or enhancing existing, locally-distinct clusters of cultural facilities, especially where they can provide an anchor for local regeneration and town centre renewal'.

Paragraph 98 of the NPPF sets out that 'to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

1. Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.
2. Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community'.

The supporting policy text to CS Policy C8 recognises that facilities such as the one proposed here are vital to local communities and provide the services needed for a good quality of life which also help to promote community cohesion.

Given the site's sustainable location within the urban area on this previously developed site, it is considered that the principle of the proposed development to the Mosque is acceptable and in accordance with the relevant saved UDP Policy G/D/1, the NPPF and PfE.

However, any development proposals on the site would also be assessed in terms of all other relevant material planning considerations, as follows.

Character and Appearance

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF requires development to achieve a high standard of design, function well, be visually attractive, and establish or maintain a strong sense of place. At the local level, CS Policies DM1 and P3 require all development to demonstrate high quality design, respond positively to local character, and contribute to the overall quality of the borough.

The proposed development comprises an extension to the existing mosque, which is a prominent building within the street scene and acts as a local landmark. The site occupies a visually sensitive position, particularly along Holland Street where changes in ground levels increase the prominence of built form. As such, careful consideration has been given to the scale, massing, materials, and architectural detailing of the extension.

The application has been preceded by a pre-application process, during which the Council's Urban Design Officer raised both concerns and recommendations in respect of the scheme's design approach. These related primarily to the building form, the relationship with the Holland Street frontage, the treatment of the gable elevation, and the quality and consistency of materials.

The submitted scheme has been amended to positively respond to this advice. Notably, the extension has been set back from the Holland Street frontage in order to better respect the established building line and preserve the visual rhythm and spatial quality of the street scene. This approach ensures that the extension appears subordinate to the existing building and avoids an overly dominant projection into the street.

In terms of architectural expression, the proposal adopts a design approach that reflects the existing mosque, including the continuation of fenestration proportions and materials. This ensures that the extension reads as a coherent and sympathetic addition to the host building. Further refinements have been introduced following officer feedback, including the use of improved material detailing and the replacement of less visually appropriate infill treatments with opaque panel elements that reflect the colour and character of the existing dome.

The gable elevation has also been enhanced through the introduction of additional detailing to break up what would otherwise be a large expanse of plain brickwork. This includes brick articulation and panel detailing, which add visual interest and contribute to a more balanced and cohesive façade. These changes address earlier concerns regarding monotony and ensure the elevation contributes positively to the wider streetscape.

The overall form and massing of the extension have been carefully considered. The proposal retains elements of variation and projection evident in the existing building, thereby maintaining architectural interest while ensuring that the scale remains appropriate in context. Furthermore, the inclusion of a green roof, consistent with the

existing building, not only contributes to visual amenity but also provides environmental benefits.

The treatment of the basement level has also been improved through design measures that introduce depth and relief within the façade, reducing the perception of visual heaviness at lower levels and ensuring a more balanced overall composition.

Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the amended scheme successfully responds to the Urban Design Officer's comments and represents a clear design evolution from the pre-application stage. The proposal would integrate effectively with the existing mosque, appear as a natural extension of the building, and maintain an appropriate relationship with the surrounding townscape.

Accordingly, the development is considered to comply with the design requirements set out in the NPPF and relevant local development plan policies and would result in an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Residential Amenity

CS Policy DM1 requires that all development proposals are compatible with surrounding land uses, both in terms of its impact upon those uses and the impact of the surrounding land uses upon the amenities of future residents.

Development should not affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy and development should mitigate against any impacts due to noise, dust, light and odour pollution. Policy G9 also requires that sensitive new development such as housing, are not adversely affected by existing sources of pollution such as roads and certain types of industry.

As established under the pre-application response, the main consideration with regards to residential amenity is the impact of the proposed extension on the living conditions of the occupiers of 1 Holland Street and 27 Lower Sherriff Street.

At its closest point, the extension would measure circa 11m to the side elevation of 1 Holland Street and 13m to the rear elevation of 27 Lower Sherriff Street.

It is acknowledged that the forward-facing windows of 1 Holland Street will generally be unaffected by the proposals in terms of light and outlook, as well as the rear facing windows (which directly face onto a tall retaining wall); however, the proposed extension would still impact on the outdoor amenity space to the rear of number 1. It was observed during a site visit that number 1's rear yard was a dark and underutilised space which is already substantially impacted by the existing retaining wall. While the proposed extension would have some impact on the outlook from the rear yard along with a reduction in the amount of early morning sunlight, it is not considered that these impacts would be materially harmful when assessed against the baseline position.

With regards to 27 Lower Sherriff Street, the proposed extension would only be visible in peripheral views from the habitable room windows and rear garden area. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposals would unduly harm the living conditions of the occupiers of number 27.

Furthermore, the windows on the side elevation that would directly overlook the rear yard of 1 Holland Street would be obscurely glazed, and it is considered that this would suitably protect the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.

For the avoidance of doubt, given the scale and nature of the facilities proposed, no concerns are had regarding noise or other forms of pollution identified within CS Policy G9.

In light of the above assessment, it is considered that the proposed development would have an acceptable relationship with surrounding residential properties, in accordance with CS Policies DM1 and G9, PfE Policy JP-P1, the SPD and the NPPF.

Highway Safety, Parking and Access

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios. CS Policy DM1 requires development proposals to provide satisfactory vehicular access with adequate parking, manoeuvring, and servicing arrangements taking into account of the proposed use and location. Under the open canopy of the existing mosque, there are 16 car parking spaces proposed with a further 5 (including 2 disabled bays) accessed via Lower Sheriff Street.

The Local Highways Authority raises no objection to the proposed development. It is acknowledged that the site occupies a sustainable location within walking distance of a densely populated residential area and Rochdale Town Centre, benefiting from good public transport links. As such, a significant proportion of users are likely to access the site without reliance on private vehicles, and car-sharing among visitors is also anticipated.

While the development generates a notable level of traffic, this is not considered significant during peak periods and is therefore unlikely to result in material highway impacts. Furthermore, the proposed extension is not expected to materially intensify traffic generation. Access arrangements remain unchanged, and no alterations to the highway network are proposed or required.

Although there is a minor reduction in on-site parking provision, this is not considered to result in severe impacts on the local highway network. There are no concerns regarding servicing, refuse collection, or emergency access, all of which will continue to operate as existing. No new highway safety issues have been identified.

Accordingly, the proposed development is acceptable and would comply with CS Policies DM1 and T2, PfE and the NPPF.

Ecology and Biodiversity

CS Policy G7 sets out that it is expected that development proposals will protect and include existing biodiversity and take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible. Policy G7 requires that no development should result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity.

PfE Policy JP-G8 seeks to deliver a net enhancement of biodiversity resources through a collective of measures which are broadly aligned with the approach to BNG outlined within the Environment Act (2021), the NPPF and supporting guidance documents. The provisions of the Environment Act in respect of BNG are a statutory requirement for planning applications but given the urban and built environment on and around the application site, it is acknowledged that this site does not impact any biodiversity, and the site has a completely sealed surface and therefore has a biodiversity value of zero.

Accordingly, it is not considered that the statutory requirement to provide 10% BNG is applicable here.

Nevertheless, in line with CS Policy G7, the proposed development should explore opportunities to improve biodiversity on the application site which should be integrated as part of its design, especially where this can secure measurable net gain. In this regard it is acknowledged that the development proposes a green roof, and this would be viewed as complying with CS Policy G7 and PfE Policy JP-G8.

Coal Mining Risk

The Coal Authority has advised that the application site lies within a defined Development High Risk Area and that there is a likelihood of historic unrecorded shallow coal mining, which may give rise to land instability and risks to public safety. Whilst a Coal Mining Risk Assessment has been submitted, this does not discount the presence of shallow workings and recommends intrusive site investigations to fully characterise ground conditions and identify any necessary remediation. In light of this, the imposition of the condition requiring site investigation, assessment and implementation of any necessary mitigation measures is considered necessary to ensure the development is safe and stable prior to construction, in accordance with national policy. A further condition requiring verification of the completed works prior to occupation is also justified to confirm that any identified risks have been appropriately addressed. The informatives are required to advise the applicant of the need to obtain separate permissions from the Coal Authority for ground investigations and works affecting coal seams, and to ensure awareness of matters relating to incidental coal extraction and health and safety considerations associated with shallow coal seams.

Subject to the recommended conditions and informatives, the development is considered acceptable and in accordance with CS Policy G9, PfE Policy JP-S1 and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

SUMMARY OF THIRD-PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways: No sustainable objections.

Coal Authority: No objections subject to conditions and informatives.

Estates: No comments received at time of writing.

Env. Health: No comments received at time of writing.

PROCEDURAL STATEMENT

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. No significant problems have arisen during the consideration of this application, and the application has been determined in a timely manner, in accordance with the policies with the Development Plan.

Human Rights and Public Sector Equality Duty

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report. In particular, Article 6 (1), of the European Convention on Human Rights in relation civil rights and a fair hearing; Article 8 of the ECHR in relation to the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 Protocol 1 of the ECHR in relation to the protection of property have all been taken into account.

In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Local Planning Authority under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. Officers have taken this into account in the assessment of the application. In particular due regard has been afforded to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;

- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers are satisfied that the application material and Officers' assessment has taken into account these issues.

The application has been considered in accordance with the Rochdale Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy – Embracing All Voices (2024-2026), which seeks to promote a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion that benefit the community as a whole.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (7)

- 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 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents hereby approved:

- A146_L(00)1000. Existing Site Plan
- A146_E(00)010. Proposed Rear Elevation. Revision A
- A146_E(00)011. Proposed Front Elevation – Option 1. Revision A
- A146_E(00)012. Proposed Gable 1 Elevation. Revision A
- A146_E(00)013. Proposed Gable 2 Elevation. Revision A
- A146_L(00)018. Proposed Basement Car Park Floor. Revision A
- A146_L(00)019. Proposed Lower Ground Floor. Revision A
- A146_L(00)020. Proposed Ground Floor. Revision A
- A146_L(00)021. Proposed First Floor. Revision A
- A146_L(00)022. Proposed Roof Plan. Revision A
- A146_L(00)1100. Proposed Site Plan. Submitted on 7 May 2026
- 'Technical Note' by Singleton Clamp & Partners Limited dated 19 September 2025
- 'Travel Plan' by Singleton Clamp & Partners Limited dated 24 April 2026
- 'Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) and Birds' by Pennine Ecological dated 13 March 2026
- 'Coal Mining Risk Assessment Report'. Ref no. CCG-C-26-16061

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 adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 The development hereby approved shall be constructed in materials contained within the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring a satisfactory visual appearance to the development and in accordance with Policies P3 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), or any equivalent Order following the amendment, re-enactment or revocation thereof, prior to first use of the extension, all windows to the 'Proposed Gable 2 Elevation' facing southwest on the development hereby approved shall be fitted with textured glass, which obscuration level is no less than Level 3 of the Pilkington Glass scale (or equivalent), and shall be non-opening below 1.7m from the internal floor level. The windows shall be retained as such thereafter:

Reason: In the interest of amenity and in compliance with Policy DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5 The car parking, servicing and other vehicular access arrangements shown on the approved plans to serve the development hereby permitted shall be made fully available for use prior to the development being first brought into use and shall be retained thereafter for their intended purpose.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and the free flow of traffic and in accordance with Policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-C8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6 No part of the development hereby permitted shall be brought into use until details of the proposed green roof have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The details shall include:

- (a) Type and depth of substrate;
- (b) Planting specification (including species and mix);
- (c) Details of drainage layers and waterproofing;
- (d) Maintenance and management plan;
- (e) Sections showing build-up and integration with roof edges, parapets and any roof structures.

The green roof shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to final occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter retained and maintained in accordance with the approved management plan.

Reason: In the interests of enhancing biodiversity and habitat provision within the site in accordance with Policy G7 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 7 No development shall commence until intrusive site investigations have been carried out on site to establish the exact situation in respect of coal mining legacy features. The findings of the intrusive site investigations shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consideration and approval in writing. The intrusive site investigations shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.

Where the findings of the intrusive site investigations (required by the condition above) identify that coal mining legacy on the site poses a risk to surface stability, no development shall commence until a detailed remediation scheme to protect the development from the effects of such land instability has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consideration and approval in writing. Following approval, the remedial works shall be implemented on site in complete accordance with the approved details.

Prior to the first occupation of the development, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and/or mitigation necessary to address the risks posed by past coal mining activity.

Reason: The undertaking of intrusive site investigations, prior to the commencement of development, is considered to be necessary to ensure that adequate information pertaining to ground conditions and coal mining legacy is available to enable appropriate remedial and mitigatory

measures to be identified and carried out before building works commence on site. This is in order to ensure the safety and stability of the development, in accordance with Policy G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason for Pre-Commencement Condition: Coal Mining Legacy investigation and any required mitigation measures will require investigation before the significant disturbance to ground and removal of material.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay.

Informatives (1)

- 1 Under the Coal Industry Act 1994 any intrusive activities which disturb or enter any coal seams, coal mine workings or coal mine entries (shafts and adits) require the prior written permission of the Mining Remediation Authority since these activities can have serious public health and safety implications. Such activities could include site investigation boreholes, the piling of foundations, other ground works and any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings and coal mine entries for ground stability purposes. Failure to obtain permission to enter or disturb our property will result in the potential for court action. Application forms for Mining Remediation Authority permission and further guidance can be obtained from: www.gov.uk/get-a-permit-to-deal-with-a-coal-mine-on-your-property.
- 2 If any future development has the potential to encounter coal seams which require excavating, for example excavation of building foundations, service trenches, development platforms, earthworks, non-coal mineral operations, an Incidental Coal Agreement will be required from the Mining Remediation Authority. Further information regarding Incidental Coal Agreements can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/incidental-coal-agreement/guidance-notes-for-applicants-for-incidental-coal-agreements.
- 3 In areas where shallow coal seams are present caution should be taken when carrying out any on site burning or heat focused activities.