

December 2023

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## **Planning, Design & Access Statement**

**57 Dartmouth Street**

Redevelopment of the site for a Place of Worship



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Urban Future Planning Consultancy Ltd on behalf of the Applicant, Jami Masjid and Islamic Centre, to accompany a planning application seeking consent for the redevelopment of the former Hop and Barleycorn Public House site at 57 Dartmouth Street, West Bromwich for a Place of Worship (Use Class F1) with associated parking alongside the demolition of 59 Dartmouth Street to facilitate the development. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying plans and other supporting documents and information submitted within the application.
- 1.2 The Jami Masjid and Islamic Centre is a highly valued<sup>1</sup> local community Mosque which has been serving the local Muslim resident population from its Dartmouth Street premises for many years. The Centre is located within an ethnically diverse area<sup>2</sup> of the town and is highly regarded within the neighbourhood for its good quality religious instruction and community-life contribution. The Centre is looking to enhance its existing offer by redeveloping and relocating to an adjacent vacant site. Consent was first granted for such a proposal in 2011 (LPA ref no. DC/11/52973) however due to the economic recession at the time, the scheme was not brought to fruition.
- 1.3 The Applicant is now in the position to bring the project to fruition and seeks to work with the LPA in progressing a successful community Place of Worship which will put the long-standing vacant site to effective use. The scheme has been modestly revised since the 2011 scheme, in order to bring about a more modern, sustainable and energy-efficient building, more details of which will be presented within the subsequent sections of this Statement. The Applicant is keen to work proactively with the LPA and has utilised the Council's pre-application advice service (LPA refno.PA/23/00727). This Statement will address the comments within the Council's formal written response and demonstrate the scheme to be policy compliant.
- 1.4 There are many benefits to be accrued through the delivery of a replacement facility, namely, it will enable separate male and female worshipping floorspace (currently not available at the existing premises) as well as other ancillary elements including better quality hygienic

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 showing user reviews/ratings of the facility by the local community.

<sup>2</sup> As per the 2021 census, the area is predominantly Asian and has seen a notable increase in the number of residents whom identify as being of Muslim faith since the last (2011) census – See Appendix 2

ablution facilities, reading rooms, storage space and an office. The proposal also provides the opportunity for the direction of prayer to face more accurately to the Qibla (compared with the existing site) and also provide enhanced security measures in terms of a lobby and entrance hall.

- 1.5 The Applicant seeks to work proactively with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in bringing forward a scheme which is compatible with the site and its surroundings. The following sections describe the application site and its surroundings as well as the Applicant's intentions for the property. It then sets out the relevant local and national planning policy context before assessing the proposal and concluding that the scheme meets the needs of the local community and is compatible with the host building and its surroundings whilst not bringing about undue harm to the local highway network or to amenity. Consequently, it is concluded that consent ought to be granted.

## 2.0 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site relates to the cleared site of the former Hop and Barleycorn Public House which is on the north-west side of Dartmouth Street at its junction with Duke Street. It is located within the urban boundary as per the adopted proposals map with no specific designation. The site measures approx. 43m x 16m and is relatively flat. The surrounding area is predominantly residential with community and commercial land uses intertwined.



Figure 1. Application site location

2.2 The site was occupied by a Public House prior to its demolition and is located within a mixed-use area where residential sits alongside a number of community and commercial uses including a Place of Worship, a medical centre, a convenience store and a clothing shop.



**Figure 2. The application site**

- 2.3 The site is located within a readily accessible location. The site can be accessed on foot and by bicycle. The Dartmouth Street metro stop is located within 150m of the site whilst the nearest bus stops are located along the nearby Baker Street and along the nearby High Street. There is unrestricted on-street parking in most surrounding side streets around the application site.



**Figure 3. Residential sits alongside a number of community and commercial uses**

## 3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Consent is sought for the redevelopment of the former Hop and Barleycorn Public House site at 57 Dartmouth Street, West Bromwich for a two storey Place of Worship (Use Class F1) with associated parking alongside the demolition of 59 Dartmouth Street to facilitate the development. The application site is located adjacent to the Applicant's existing premises and the current facility will cease and relocate to the application site.
- 3.2 The replacement facility will enable separate male and female worshipping floorspace (currently not available at the existing premises) as well as other ancillary elements including better quality hygienic ablution facilities, reading rooms, storage space and an office. The proposal also provides the opportunity for the direction of prayer to face more accurately to the Qibla (compared with the existing site) and also provide enhanced security measures in terms of a lobby and entrance hall.
- 3.3 Consent was first granted for such a proposal in 2011 (LPA ref no. DC/11/52973) as shown overleaf. The scheme has been revised in order to bring to fruition a more modern, sustainable and energy-efficient building. Please refer to the accompanying plans for full details of the Applicant's intentions for the site including the intended internal layout of the premises.
- 3.4 There is space on site for a bin store and off-road parking provision.

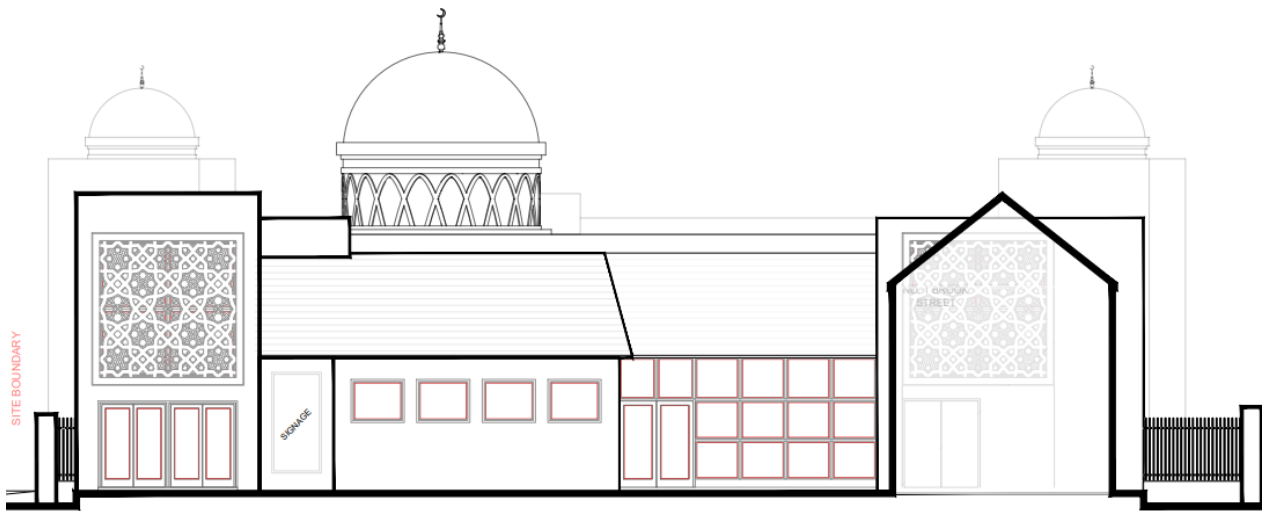


Figure 4. Proposed elevations (not to scale)

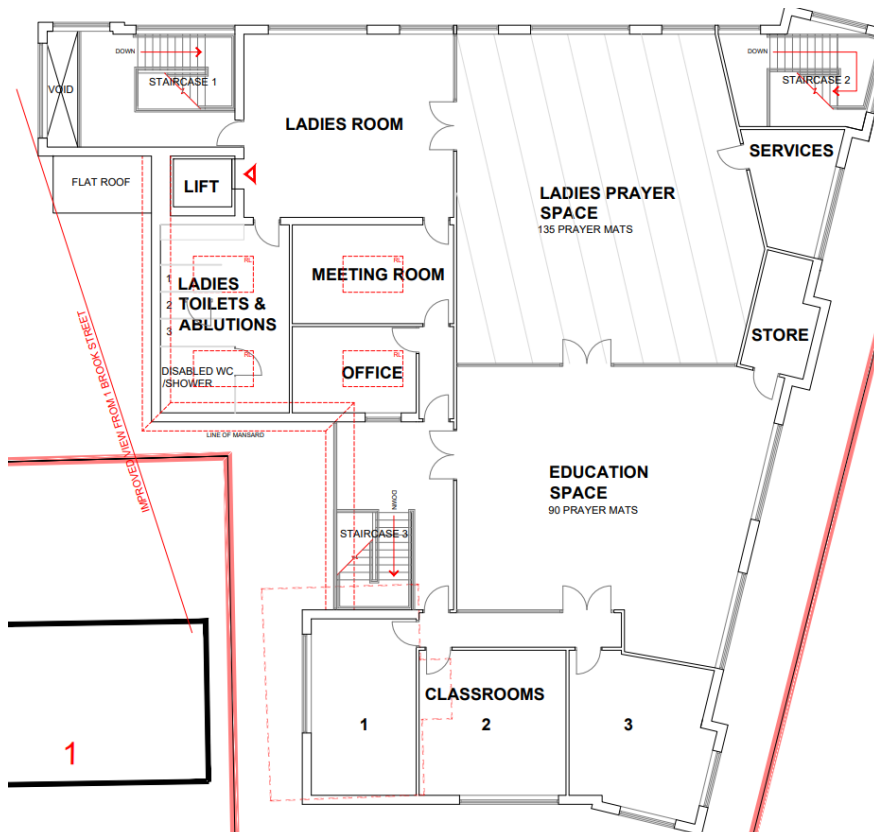


Figure 5. Proposed plan extract (not to scale)



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## 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Local Plan for Sandwell comprises the Black Country Core Strategy and the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also of relevance.

### *Black Country Core Strategy & Site Allocations & Delivery DPD*

4.2 The following policies are of relevance:

- **Policy ENV3 Design Quality** seeks good quality design in new developments.
- **Policy TRAN2 Managing Transport Impacts of New Development** Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals that are likely to have significant transport implications unless applications are accompanied by proposals to provide an acceptable level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport to and from all parts of a development including, in particular, access by walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing.
- **SAD EOS 9 Urban Design Principles** the Council will reject poor designs, particularly those that are inappropriate in their locality, for example, those clearly out of scale with or incompatible with their surroundings.
- **SAD DM6: Community Facilities** in considering proposals for new, or conversion or extension of existing community facilities, including places of worship and/or religious instruction, where noise from the proposed activities is likely to affect neighbouring properties, consideration will be given to attaching conditions to any planning permission granted, which would reduce or eliminate such problems such as restricting the hours of use. Consideration will be given to the need for the provision of car parking in association with the development. This will include an assessment of whether the majority of people walk to the place of worship or religious instruction; the proximity and availability of public transport facilities; the availability of other car parking in the vicinity.

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## *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

- 4.3 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies. According to the NPPF, the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).
- 4.4 The NPPF requires planning decisions for social and cultural facilities to take account of an integrated approach to consider the location of housing, economic uses, and community facilities and services. The NPPF also mentions that planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities (such as meeting places, cultural buildings and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.
- 4.5 The NPPF also attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, seeing design as a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Development should be high quality and inclusive. The NPPF requires planning authorities to take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 4.6 Chapter 9 of the NPPF relates to the promotion of sustainable transport. Para 102 stresses the importance of development proposals addressing transportation issues at an early stage in a development in order to identify the potential impacts of a proposal and look at opportunities to reduce them together with promoting more sustainable methods of transport. Para 103 states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives, focusing on locations that will limit the need to travel offering a genuine choice of travel modes, with the overall aim being to reduce congestion and emissions. Para 105 states that planning policies should support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.

## 5.0 PLANNING APPRAISAL

5.1 The purpose of this section of the Statement is to identify and assess the main planning considerations raised by the proposals in the context of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance. The key issues, were an application to be submitted, would be;

- the principle of the development, having regard to the provisions of the adopted Development Plan and other local planning policy documents;
- the effect of development on residential amenity,
- the effect of development on the character and appearance of the area; and;
- the effect of development on the local highway network.

5.2 Each of these matters is considered below.

### *The principle of development*

5.3 As set out previously, the Jami Masjid and Islamic Centre is a highly valued<sup>3</sup> local community Mosque which has been serving the local Muslim resident population from its Dartmouth Street premises for many years. The Centre is located within an ethnically diverse area<sup>4</sup> of the town and is highly regarded within the neighbourhood for its good quality religious instruction and community services. The Centre is looking to improve its existing offer by redeveloping and relocating to an adjacent vacant site. Consent was first granted for such a proposal in 2011 (LPA ref no. DC/11/52973) however due to the economic recession at the time the scheme was not brought to fruition.

5.4 There are many benefits to be accrued through the delivery of a replacement facility, namely, it will enable separate male and female worshipping floorspace (currently not available at the existing premises) as well as other ancillary elements including better quality hygienic ablution facilities, reading rooms, storage space and an office. The proposal also provides the opportunity for the direction of prayer to face more accurately to the Qibla (compared with the existing site) and also provide enhanced security measures in terms of a lobby and entrance hall.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1 showing user reviews/ratings of the facility by the local community.

<sup>4</sup> As per the 2021 census, the area is predominantly Asian – See Appendix 2

- 5.5 As per the 2021 census, the area's demographic is predominantly Asian and it is within this context of enhancing existing community facilities catering for the town's Muslim population that this application ought to be considered. In this respect, the proposal would be compliant with Policy SAD DM6: *Community Facilities*. The Planning Chairman Councillor's comments are noted from the previous application<sup>5</sup>:

Planning chairman Councillor Ann Jaron said: "Nobody has really got any major problems with it, it is not going to be a new place of worship, it is just going to replace an old one."

- 5.6 Both local and national planning policy place a great importance on planning positively for the provision and use of community facilities (such as meeting places, cultural buildings and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments (NPPF Para 70). The previous scheme under LPA ref no. DC/11/52973 was granted in 2011; the Black Country Core Strategy was adopted in the same year and so reference would have been made to the same policies of the current plan, given that it would have been nearing adoption and would have held significant weight. As such, the principle of development has already been established and there has been no change in the direction of policy since then. The Council have recently granted consents for a number of similar places of worships in similar locations including LPA ref nos. DC/20/63920 (Jami Masjid and Bangladeshi Islamic Centre 10-13 Lewisham Road Smethwick) and DC/18/62418 (Cradley Heath Mosque, Plant Street).
- 5.7 In assessing the principle of development within the pre-app, the Case Officer confirmed "Policy SAD DM6 relates to places of worship and/or religious instruction. The proposals would be located in a predominantly residential area, nevertheless it would occupy a visible corner plot on the periphery of the Town Centre Core. It would therefore broadly accord with the policy aim to locate new religious facilities on prominent sites on the fringes of commercial areas. The proposals raise no significant policy concerns."
- 5.8 On this basis, there is no conflict with the spatial development policies of the adopted development plan and the NPPF advises that proposals

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<sup>5</sup> Planners approve West Bromwich mosque | Express & Star ([expressandstar.com](http://expressandstar.com))

which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. The NPPF instructs that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole or its specific policies indicate development should be restricted. The scheme will clearly deliver beneficial sustainable development for the local community that should be granted planning permission, and it will not result in any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of its approval. This is confirmed in the following assessment of the detailed material considerations relevant to the application.

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### *The effect of development on residential amenity*

- 5.9 As previously set out, the existing facility has long served the local community as a place of worship and those residing nearby are well accustomed to the presence of a Mosque and the activity generated by it (e.g. comings and goings of worshippers for quiet daily prayer). The Applicant has commissioned a Noise Assessment by Blue Acoustics which accompanies this Statement.
- 5.10 The five daily prayers in Islam are performed at times determined essentially by the position of the Sun in the sky and generally last no more than 15 minutes. The Applicant confirms that average daily attendance for such prayers is around 30. The Juma Prayer at Friday lunch time (a key day of the Islamic week) however takes around 30-40 minutes. There are two special Eid prayers every year and the month of Ramadan is also a special time with additional evening prayers. The current facility provides a place for those prayers, and this would continue post-redevelopment with no changes to the existing opening hours. No external call to prayer system is currently in place and neither does one feature within the proposed extension.
- 5.11 Whilst it is acknowledged that the size of the replacement building would increase, this is primarily to enable an internal reconfiguration and provide better circulation and enhanced space per user while also providing a dedicated space for female users (currently not available in the existing facility). Moreover, the proposal provides the opportunity for the direction of prayer to be corrected to face more accurately to the Qibla and also provide enhanced security measures in terms of a lobby and entrance hall. The Centre serves and draws its congregation from a particular section of the Muslim community. As such, it is not considered that there will be a material difference in the number of people attending the premises at any one time compared with the existing facility. No issues were raised in this regard in 2011 as well as during the pre-app.
- 5.12 Whilst all uses generate some activity, the worship element is not considered to be unduly noisy and there are many examples within the wider area and beyond of where such facilities exist adjacent to residential properties<sup>6</sup>. They tend to operate without any known detriment to nearby residential occupiers. Moreover, as shown overleaf, many of them are on a much larger scale than that proposed within this

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 3

scheme. Community facilities such as Churches, Mosques, Village Halls etc are purposefully located within residential settings to serve the local community and the Applicant confirms that most of the congregation reside in the surrounding residential streets and attend the site on foot. Moreover, LPA ref no. DC/11/52973 assessed residential impact and found such a scheme to be acceptable:

In terms of this policy the application site is not on a main frontage on the edge of a commercial area as it is within a residential area. However, your Committee has in the past on two separate occasions considered that a mosque would be acceptable on Dartmouth Street. As the proposed building would not be attached to any other building then there would be no transference of noise



*Blackburn Central Mosque/ Jamia Masjid*



*Masjide Noorul Islam, Blackburn*



**Figure 6. Jamia Mosque Sultania, Brierfield, Lancashire**

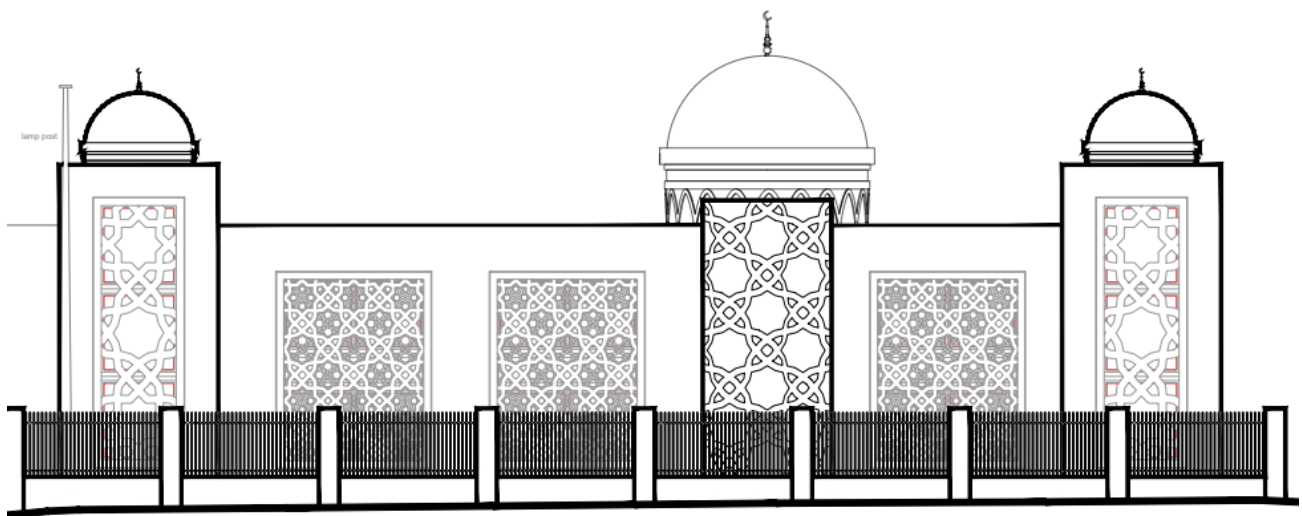


- 5.13 Wirth regards to neighbour impact, the increase in the amount of glazing compared with the previous scheme would reduce the perceived massing of the structure when viewed from properties adjacent. Moreover, the space between the premises and the properties opposite post-redevelopment would match that of the general pattern of development seen in the locality, which is characterised by higher density Victorian terraces. The height of the building post-redevelopment will broadly correspond to height of buildings surrounding the site and would not appear in any way over dominant or at odds. No concern was raised during the 2011 scheme regarding the size and scale of the building.
- 5.14 Given the above, it is considered this application proposal would not give rise to adverse impacts on amenity. In these respects, the proposal accords with the NPPF which seeks to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. The previous Case Officer's assessment for the 2011 scheme is considered valid:

Moving onto the affect on neighbours amenity particularly with regard to light, outlook and privacy, it should be noted that the former public house that used to occupy the site was also a two-storey building and would have clearly had an affect on neighbours light and outlook and these residents have, since the demolition of the public house, become used to more light reaching their properties and with a less oppressive outlook. However, although the proposed mosque would be slightly higher than the preceding building I do not consider any loss of light or outlook when considered against what was previously on the site to be so significant as to warrant refusal. With regard to privacy the building has been designed so that there would be no overlooking windows onto neighbouring houses.

*The effect of development on the character and appearance of the area*

5.15 The overall height of the proposed building would be largely consistent with that previously permitted as well as the surrounding built form, which is mostly two storey. Moreover, the space between the premises and the properties opposite post-redevelopment would match that of the general pattern of development seen in the locality, which is characterised by higher density Victorian terraces. The revised scheme features a more generous amount of glazing compared with the previous scheme, in order to reduce the perceived bulk of the structure and break up the façade but more importantly to enable plentiful natural light to enhance the building's energy efficiency in light of the green agenda.



**Figure 7. Proposed elevations (*not to scale*)**

5.16 As shown below and in Appendix 3, there are many examples across the country of Islamic religious architecture sat alongside traditional (usually Victorian) inner urban dwelling stock and this provides a contrasting but widely accepted architectural blend in localities with high concentrations of ethnic minority residents.



Figure 8. Example - Jameah Mosque, Leicester

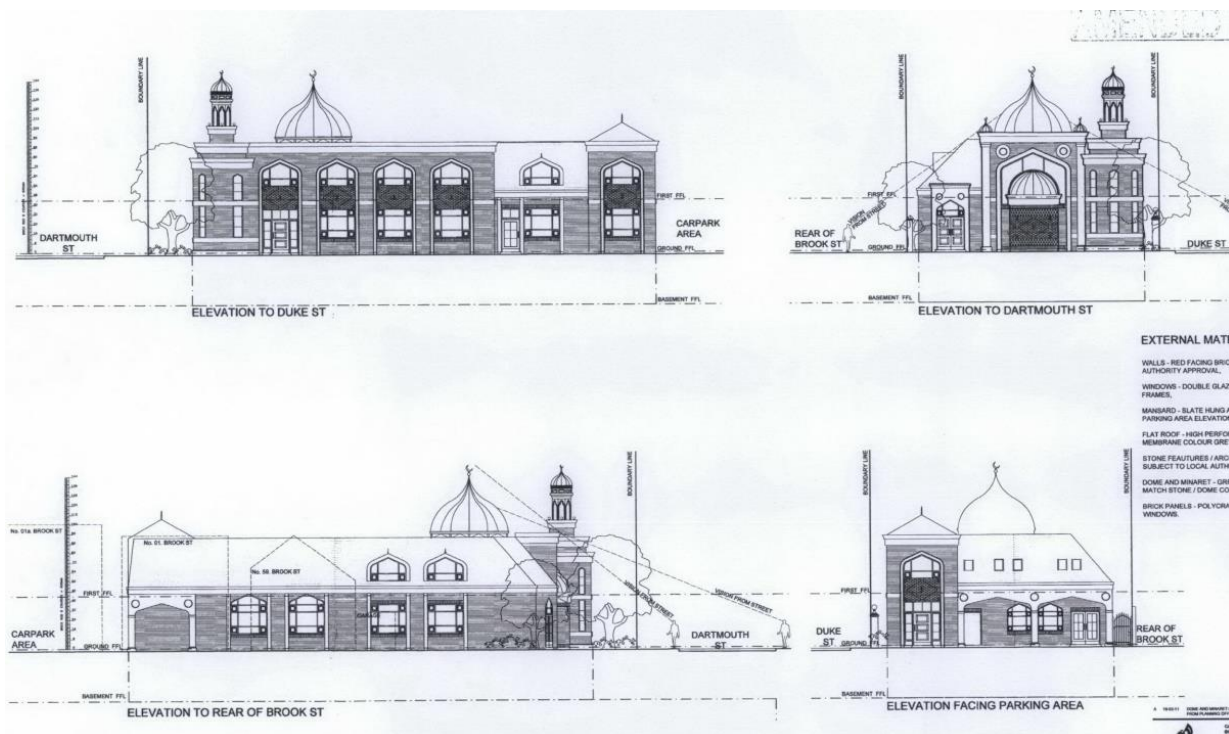


Figure 9. Scheme approved under LPA ref no. DC/11/52973

5.17 To conclude, the proposed scheme would sit appropriately in the street-scene, enabling the Applicant to fully embrace its use as an Islamic place of worship worthy of architecture which reflects its use. The Applicant is committed to using high quality, matching building materials and sustainable modes of construction in order to bring about the proposed scheme, in line with Policy ENV3 Design Quality and the NPPF.

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### *The effect of development on the local highway network*

- 5.18 The NPPF seeks less reliance on the use of the private vehicle in all new developments and seeks to promote sustainable travel modes where possible. The site is best placed to take advantage of sustainable travel modes given its location, 150m from the metro system and its high connectivity via local bus routes. Moreover, the site is readily accessible on foot. The Applicant confirms that most users of the centre currently arrive to the facility on foot from the surrounding locality<sup>7</sup> and there is no reason to suggest why this would change. The Mosque has been operating for a long period of time and there have been no known concerns regarding traffic generation or parking demand to date. Overall, the size of the proposal is similar to that granted consent in 2011.
- 5.19 With regards to the local highway network, given that the proposal replaces an existing facility, it is not envisaged that the replacement building would materially alter the current situation; the proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant provisions of the development plan and national policy. Should the LPA consider it necessary, a Travel Plan could accompany the application or be conditioned, setting out how the Centre will promote sustainable travel and manage parking. The Applicant has commissioned a Transport Statement by CTS Traffic, the findings of which are submitted alongside this Statement.
- 5.20 To conclude, the traffic impact of the proposed development will have a negligible effect on the operation / capacity of the local highway network and, combined with the good road safety record within the local highway network, this should mean on highway and traffic grounds the application for the proposed extension development scheme should be approved. If anything, the site is even more readily accessible owing to improvements in local public transport since the 2011 application. Permitting the scheme would not jeopardise the intentions of Policy TRAN2 *Managing Transport Impacts of New Development*.

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<sup>7</sup> Circa 90% of worshippers reside within a 10 minute walking distance of the site

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## 6.0 CONCLUSION

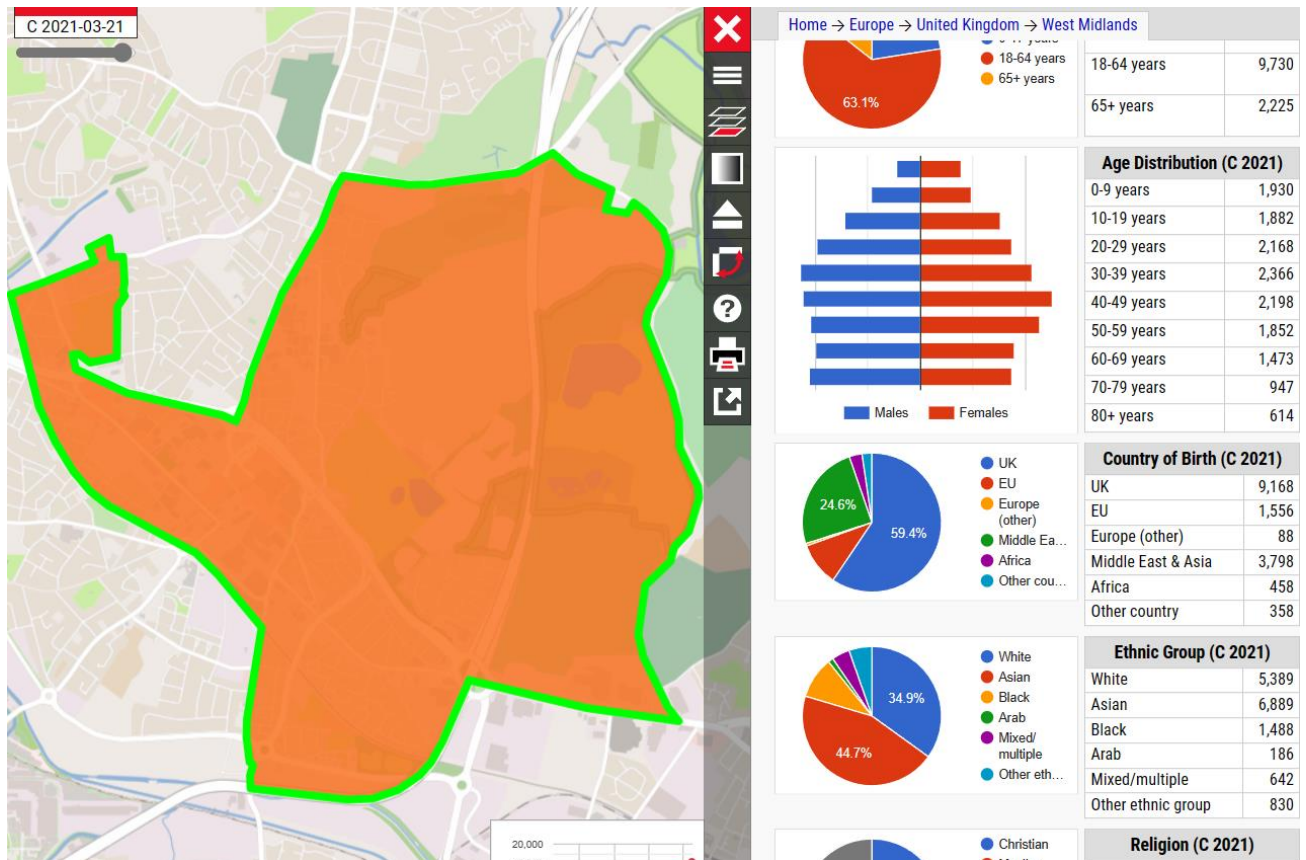
- 6.1 This Statement has justified the merits and acceptability of the proposed redevelopment of the former Hop and Barleycorn Public House site at 57 Dartmouth Street, West Bromwich for a Place of Worship (Use Class F1) with associated parking alongside the demolition of 59 Dartmouth Street to facilitate the development. The Applicant is looking to better meet the needs of the area's Muslim resident community by offering an enhanced community worship facility. The proposal provides the opportunity for the direction of prayer to be corrected to face more accurately to the Qibla and also provide enhanced security measures and would not give rise to adverse amenity or highways impacts for the reasons set out.
- 6.2 The Applicant seeks to work proactively with the LPA and has utilised the Council's pre-app advice service and has had a positive response. The Applicant now looks forward to positive discussions regarding the scheme which clearly meets Government planning policy requiring LPAs to plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities.
- 6.3 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 6.4 For the reasons provided throughout, the Local Planning Authority is kindly requested to grant planning permission.

## Appendix 1. Online reviews from the local community

The screenshot displays the Google Reviews page for 'Jami Masjid & Islamic Centre'. At the top, there is a search bar with the location name and a search icon. Below the search bar, there are two tabs: 'Overview' and 'Reviews', with 'Reviews' being the active tab. A rating summary shows a 4.9 average rating based on 47 reviews, represented by a bar chart and five stars. A note indicates 'Reviews aren't verified'. A 'Write a review' button is visible. Below the summary, there are search and sort filters. Three reviews are listed:

- Fearless Adventurer** (Local Guide · 22 reviews · 26 photos): 5 stars, 9 months ago. Review: "I couldn't find the entrance for it but as i went 1st time there, the entrance gate is on side road. Small iron black door is the entrance." Includes 'Like' and 'Share' buttons.
- Ahsan Choudhury** (5 reviews · 4 photos): 5 stars, 6 years ago. Review: "Great mosque, first time I came here everyone was very friendly and helpful in showing me where the wash rooms/prayer rooms were. Parking can easily be found on the local side roads." Includes 'Like' (1) and 'Share' buttons.
- Arfan Ali** (Local Guide · 146 reviews · 93 photos): 5 stars, a year ago. Review text is partially cut off.

## Appendix 2. Ward Statistics



[West Bromwich Central \(Ward, United Kingdom\) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location \(citypopulation.de\)](https://citypopulation.de)



## Appendix 3. Islamic places of worship set within Inner Urban areas of England



Wimbledon Mosque, Durnsford Road, Ryfold Rd, Wimbledon Park, London SW19 8DS







*Blackburn Central Mosque/ Jamia Masjid*



*Masjide Noorul Islam Blackburn*



Jameah  
Mosque,  
Leicester



Masjid-E-Zainabia Madressa, Jubilee Mill, Logwood Street, Blackburn



Jamia Mosque Sultania, Brierfield