

	Strategic Planning Committee – Developer Presentation 11 December 2025
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Pre-Application Reference:	W0225.22
Location:	222-226 South Street, Romford, RM1 2AD
Ward:	St Alban's
Description:	Partial demolition of existing building(s) and redevelopment of the site to erect a new Havering Islamic Community Centre
Case Officer:	Malachy McGovern

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will recall that these proposals were presented to the Strategic Planning Committee on 13 November 2025, for which officers presented a briefing note on the proposed development. This proposed development is being re-presented to Members following Member feedback where they raised a number of points at the meeting and invited the applicant to present the scheme in a focused form picking up the concerns raised in particular to servicing and transportation issues, as well as building design.
- 1.2 In response to the concerns raised by Members the applicant will present the proposals in more detail in respect to the following matters:

Transport and Movement

- Number of attendees and comparison with existing
- Times of day and days of the week
- Where do Mosque users live (confirm that this is a local facility)
- Confirm arrival/leaving patterns of movement and how these can be accommodated within the building / overall site / surrounding highway
- Existing pedestrian crossing / junction (South Street, Oldchurch Road and Thurloe Gardens) capacity / waiting times
- Drop off / pick up numbers and capacity of space in Oldchurch Rise car park
- Impact on ring road (potential for queuing vehicles)

Building Design

- Mosaic tiles (colour)
- Prominence of the Portico
- Scale of the Riverside entrance
- Parity of space for men/women

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site is immediately south of Romford Town Centre with a PTAL score of 6a. Although not in a Conservation Area the site is occupied by the locally listed Page Calnan building, which is a large double-height single storey building, constructed with yellow stock brick and stone tile cladding to the front in Art Deco style. There is recessed brick panelling to the sides and rear with a Diocletian window in the rear gable. Attached to the side and rear are single and two storey additions occupied by other commercial uses.
- 2.2 To the rear of the Page Calnan building is an area of hardstanding used for vehicular parking which is bound to the west by the River Rom. Access is taken from Oldchurch Road, adjacent to the signalised junction with South Street.
- 2.3 Further to the east along South Street are two-storey 19th century houses, where numbers 230-268 are locally listed for their strong architectural character and build quality of Victorian Villas. To the northwest is a four-storey commercial office building.
- 2.4 Flood Zone 3 is adjacent to the southwestern boundary with flood zone two encroaching into the southern part of the site.
- 2.5 A tree preservation order is in place for a horse chestnut tree immediately adjacent to the site's southeastern boundary.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Due to the proposed redevelopment of Bridge Close (under P1165.23) recently granted planning permission (subject to completion of a s106 legal agreement) the Havering Islamic Community Centre are exploring the feasibility of relocating to the site at South Street.
- 3.2 The scheme before Members involve the partial demolition of the Page Calnan building within the site to erect a rear extension to form an Islamic Community Centre. The facade of the existing building would be retained with a Qubba (dome) and minaret added to the retained building. The proposal is then to create a building set over three floors to provide an enhanced environment for prayer and religious classes for the community.
- 3.3 Owing to the site level difference a lower ground level would be created for addition prayer and community use space which is accessed from the northeast elevation and southwest facing entrance. A men's prayer hall is situated on the ground level with access taken from South Street and a women's prayer hall / education space at first floor with access taken from the west side of the building facing the River Rom. Overall, the proposed floor space would equal 2453 square metres.
- 3.4 The existing building entrance facing South Street would be used with the intervening space between the footway and building edge to create additional spill out space. Circulation space for visitors would principally be down the west side of the building leading to the rear of the site. Further to the south adjacent to the River Rom the site

extends along the backs of 230-240 South Street. This area of the site is proposed to provide 8 disabled driver bays (2 for electric vehicles) and 1 loading bay. Access to the bays would be taken from Oldchurch Road.

- 3.5 In terms of quantum the proposed Islamic Community Centre would accommodate up to 1200 worshippers.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 None relevant.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The minutes from the November Strategic Planning Committee are below.

Agenda Item 5 – Discussion Summary	
1. Current and Proposed Attendance Levels	
A request was made for detailed information on current attendee numbers at the existing Islamic Centre and a comparison with the projected attendance for the proposed facility.	
2. Future Development Context	
A plea was made to consider the changing nature of the area and account for future developments and scenarios in the assessment.	
3. Local vs Wider Community Use	
Members queried the extent to which the facility is intended to serve the immediate local community or a wider audience.	
4. Public Realm and Wayfinding	
Comments were made about the importance of improving the surrounding public realm, including signage and wayfinding, especially if visitors are unfamiliar with the area.	
Concerns were raised regarding the potential for increased car use by visitors seeking parking.	
5. Evidence Base for Transport Assumptions	
Members asked for robust evidence showing where attendees live, their likely travel mode, and the number of disabled visitors expected.	
Request for further presentation on the transport impact of the development	
6. Public Transport Capacity	
Members requested that the transport assessment consider the current capacity of local bus services and identify opportunities for improvements.	
7. Drop-off Management and Marshals	

Members requested clarification on drop-off arrangements, including marshal availability, times of highest attendance, and how these periods would be managed.
How will it be ensured that there are no drop-offs and pickups from the road outside the site or the ring road
Further assurance was sought that vehicles would not obstruct or overspill into surrounding areas during peak periods.
8. Service Timings and Overlaps
Members requested further details of different service session timings and how overlapping arrivals and departures would be managed to avoid conflict or congestion.
9. Site Location and Pedestrian Safety
Comments were raised regarding the site's proximity to the ring road and whether pedestrian safety and the level of surrounding activity had been fully considered in the design.
10. Parking Capacity
Clarification was sought on whether Oldchurch Rise car park itself and the road has adequate capacity to accommodate the anticipated traffic and parking demand associated with the proposal.
11. Site Access and Junction Impact
Questions were raised about how the main entrance would be managed and whether the proposal would negatively affect the nearby junction or worsen traffic conditions.
Further concerns were expressed regarding pedestrian safety and safe crossing opportunities.
12. Travel Plan Requirements
A strong request was made for a detailed travel plan to discourage drop-off/pick-up at the site and promote the use of public transport.
13. General Support for the Scheme
A member commented positively on the scheme, describing it as welcome and encouraging the design team to produce something of architectural note.
14. Heritage Considerations
Members supported retaining the existing building but suggested exploring ways to highlight positive heritage features, including the coloured mosaic element.
An artistic approach to the treatment of this part of the building was encouraged.
15. Security Design

Concerns were raised regarding the proposed 2-metre fencing, with a request to explore more aesthetically pleasing or artistic alternatives.
16. Noise and Loudspeakers
Members queried whether the scheme would include loudspeakers and sought reassurance that noise attenuation measures would prevent disturbance to nearby properties.
17. Landscaping and Trees
Comments were made on the need for robust landscaping, including replacement of any lost trees.
Members also asked whether additional greening could be delivered and if a living/green roof had been considered.
18. Visual Impact and Massing
Concerns were raised about the perceived bulk of the building when viewed from the rear, with suggestions to explore improvements to that elevation.
19. Internal Layout and Accessibility
Members questioned whether the proposed space allocation provided parity between male and female accommodation areas.
Queries were also made regarding facilities for disabled visitors and accessibility provision.
20. Cooking Odours and Ventilation
A request was made to ensure early integration of extraction and odour-control systems into the design to prevent nuisance.
21. Waste and Refuse Storage
Clarification was sought on proposed waste storage and refuse arrangements.

- 5.2 Members are reminded that the proposal were presented to QRP on 2nd September the details of which are set out in the officer briefing note to SPC dated 13th November.
- 5.3 In terms of material planning considerations relating to this proposal these were set out previously in the officer briefing note for SPC 13th November.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed development remains in the pre-application stage and additional work remains to be carried out. The scheme will be progressed through a design led approach. At this stage, Members' guidance will be most helpful to incorporate as the various elements are brought together.

