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11th of March 2025

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

### Renovation and Internal Reconfiguration of Weston Islamic Education Centre

#### Site Address:

66 Palmer Street, Weston-super-Mare

14, 14a & 16 Waterloo Street, Weston-super-Mare

## 1. Foreword

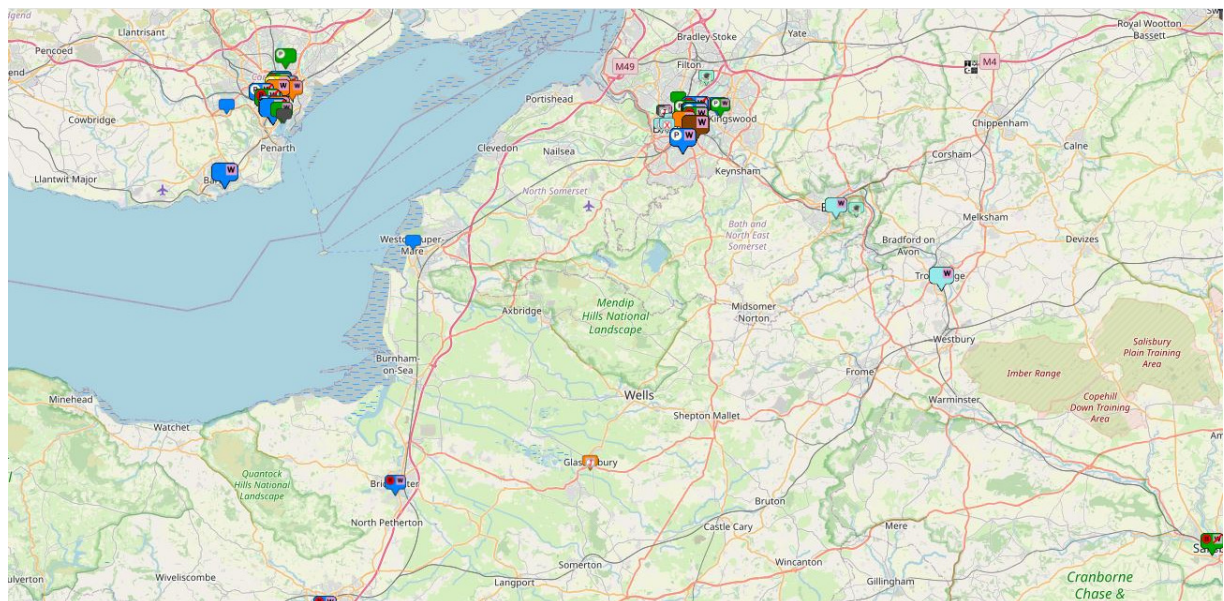
This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support the planning application for the proposed renovation and internal reconfiguration of the Weston Islamic Education Centre. The aim is to create a landmark community facility that meets the spiritual, educational, and social needs of the local Muslim population while enhancing the site's contribution to Weston-super-Mare's urban landscape. By integrating modern design principles with traditional Islamic architectural elements, the project aspires to be a sustainable and inclusive addition to the town.

At its core, this project is about transformation and renewal. It represents a bold step forward for the Muslim community, evolving the existing Weston Islamic Education Centre into a dynamic community hub that retains a dedicated space for worship while expanding its role in education, wellness, and social service.

The vision is to establish a space where prayer, learning, and community engagement are equally valued. By integrating complementary community spaces, the centre will cater to the spiritual, physical, and intellectual needs of members across all generations.

The Weston Islamic Education Centre is a vital hub for the Muslim community in North Somerset and Somerset Counties. As it is the only mosque and Islamic centre between Bristol and Bridgwater, and it serves a wide catchment area with visitors travelling from up to 10 miles away.

The existing mosque is a two-story building, and the acquisition of the adjacent property presents a unique opportunity for expansion and integration. The redevelopment will maximize the site's potential, unifying the existing and new spaces into a cohesive architectural identity while enhancing functionality.

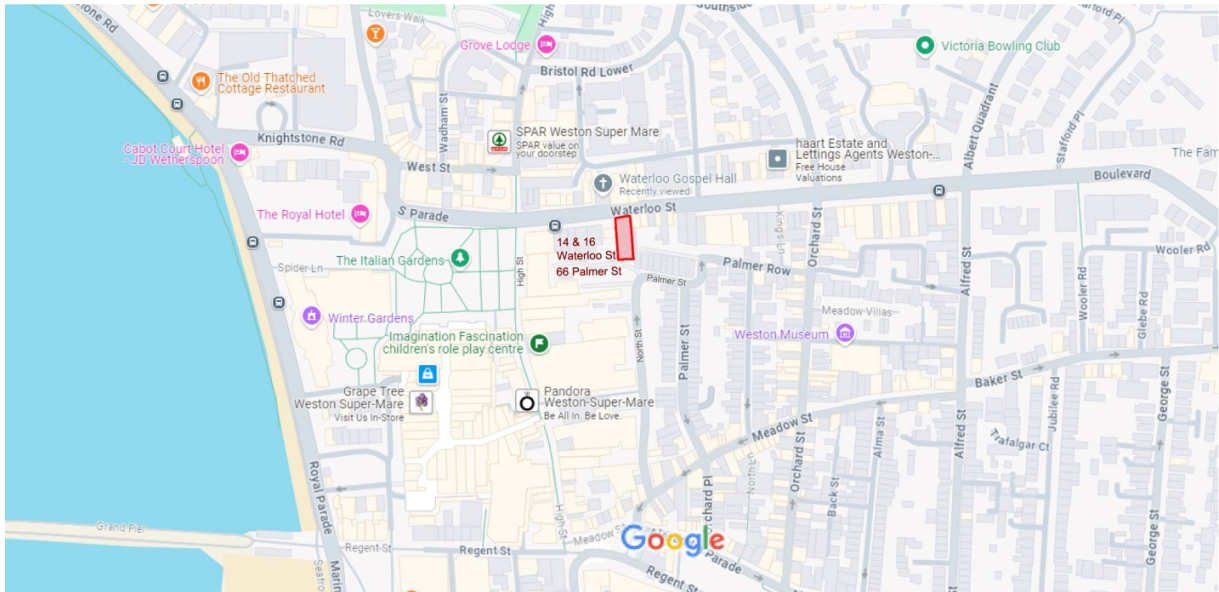


*Mosques and Islamic Community facilities in the region.*

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Site Location**

The site of 66 Palmer Street, 14 & 16 Waterloo Street is situated in a vibrant, well-connected central area of Weston-super-Mare, and can be accessed from both sides - Palmer Street and Waterloo Street. Located within walking distance from the High Street and Seaside Promenade, the site is well-positioned to serve the broader community while contributing to the area's urban fabric. The project site is nestled within a prominent mixed-use neighbourhood of residential, commercial, cultural buildings and also some touristic spots.



*Site location within central Weston-super-Mare, Google Map.*

There are already several community lead and religious places in the nearest context of the Islamic Education Centre along Waterloo Street/Boulevard, that contribute to the diverse social and community fabric of the area: Refugees Welcome North Somerset at 12 Waterloo Street, Second Step- North Somerset Wellbeing at 4 Boulevard, Boulevard United Reformed Church and Waterloo Gospel Hall.

It benefits from excellent public transportation links, with multiple bus stops within a brief walk of less than five minutes, providing easy access to various parts of Weston-super-Mare and surrounding areas. Weston-super-Mare railway station is only 0.5 mile away - 12min walking distance, and the Interchange Bus Stops at Locking Road/Regent Street are only 0.3 mile away - 6min walking distance, making it easily accessible from other places within the South West.

For cyclists, the location is well accessible within cycle friendly routes via some minor roads as well as traffic free cycle route on the seaside promenade.

Located within walking distance from the High Street and Seaside Promenade, the site is well-positioned to serve the broader community while contributing to the area's urban structure.

## 2.2 Site Description and Character

The project site is located in the Town Centre of Weston-super-Mare, within Weston Conservation Area, therefore the neighbourhood has a significant importance in shaping the historic urban fabric.

The neighbourhood has a mixed building typology, with the majority of it comprising the rear of high street buildings (both commercial and residential) and terraced residential buildings. In fact, this section of the Palmer Street and most of the North Street streetscape consists of garages, open parking lots, rear residential garden walls, and access lanes leading to the back of High Street and Waterloo Street properties. The immediate neighbourhood looks unorganised and somewhat fragmented, with inconsistent building alignments, varying boundary treatments, and a lack of cohesive urban design. This results in a visually cluttered streetscape, where service areas, parking, and storage spaces dominate the view, rather than an active frontage or well-defined public realm. The building that stands out in the nearest context is the adjacent terraced housing - reminiscent of 1860's working class housing.



Immediate context:

View from Palmer street.



View from North Street.

The development site stretches between two streets - the Waterloo Street, being main road with important amenities, and the Palmer Street - parallel to the Waterloo Street, that serves mainly terraced residential buildings and as an access road to the rear of the properties along the High Street and Waterloo Street.

The 66 Palmer Street is considered the main pedestrian and vehicular access to the Mosque and Islamic Centre, while the Waterloo Street provides main access to the 1st and 2nd floor residential flats, main ground floor mosque entrance for women, as well an additional entrance to the ground floor of the former charity shop at 14 Waterloo Street.

Currently the site is characterised by several existing, interconnected spaces:

- **The existing Mosque and Islamic Centre building** - housing men's section, that is a two storey building accessed from 66 Palmer Street, BS23 1RU. It is connected further on the ground floor to a separate space for women, ground floor of 16 Waterloo Street, BS23 1LN, which has an exclusive access from Waterloo Street.

- **A newly purchased property of 14 Waterloo Street** - accessed from both streets (Palmer Street and Waterloo Street), and consists of several spaces:

- a. **Dwelling area on the first and second floor** - accessed from Waterloo Street. Currently the spaces do not form defined flats. (entrance at 14a Waterloo Street, BS23 1LN)



b. **Open plan ground floor space** - formerly a charity retail, with a display windows and entrance from the 14 Waterloo Street and an access door to the building at the back. (entrance at 14 Waterloo Street, BS23 1LN)

c. **Two storey building** - accessed from 66 Palmer Street, BS23 1RU - with an open plan first floor. Currently connected via an access door with the dwellings on the first floor, former retail space on the ground floor and the first floor prayer space.

**Since the site is elongated and stretches between two streets, there are two main elevations of different importance and style:**

- **The facade of 14 Waterloo Street** is a part of a Victorian commercial/retail streetscape - ground floor forms a modern glazed corner storefront with tiled walls, while the first and second floor is a Victorian stone facade with ornamental carvings. There is also a main access door to the residential flats on the first and second floor.

- **The facade of 16 Waterloo Street** (ground floor only) is a retail front, with modern eastern-arched windows, white painted walls and blue mosaic tiles. This side provides exclusive entrance to the women's section of the mosque.

- **The facade along Palmer Street** consists of joined buildings - 66 Palmer St and the rear of 14 Waterloo St. The elevation is deeply recessed from the terraced row of Palmer Street residential buildings (1860's working class housing), and aligns with a row of garages along an access lane, off Palmer Street. The existing facade is divided into two joined buildings of industrial look, with two separate entrances and different window sizes.



*Facade of 66 Palmer street with the back of 14 Waterloo Street.*



*Facade of 14 & 16 Waterloo Street.*

The site is fully build up within its boundaries. The existing buildings on site have varied heights and roof types. When seen from the North St and Palmer St, the volumes look undefined and chaotic.

The front of the project's building along Waterloo Street fits in a local character, with its Victorian stone facade and modern store fronts on the ground floor. On the other hand, the buildings at Palmer Street, do not present a specific style, and look rather industrial with a lack of character.

Since the site is fully built up, it cannot be directly accessed by vehicles. There is one dedicated parking space in front of 66 Palmer Street entrance. Pedestrian access is both from Palmer Street as well as the Waterloo Street.

### 3. Use and Access

#### 3.1 Site Use

Currently the two storey building at 66 Palmer Street and the ground floor of 16 Waterloo Street host the main Islamic Education Centre facilities, and the spaces are not enough to cater for the needs of the growing community. In order to provide adequate spaces and facilities, the community purchased adjacent property of 14 Waterloo Street, which they need to use to increase prayer capacity. Yet without adjustments to the buildings layout and access, the existing spaces are not fully functional and remain underused.

The existing 1st and 2nd floor of acquired building at 14 Waterloo Street, are apartment floors. Currently these floors are open and connected with main staircase, and due to their current layout are not forming independent flats. The community of Weston Islamic Education Centre is in need to provide a dwelling for the Imam of the mosque and his family (a Muslim religious leader) and other personnel assisting the community.



Existing site use diagram.

Previously, 14 Waterloo Street operated as a charity shop under Use Class E. As part of the proposal to integrate this property into the Weston Islamic Education Centre, the applicant is seeking a change of use to Class F1 to reflect its new educational and community-focused function.

Additionally, the site includes an existing residential component spanning multiple levels. The proposal includes an internal reconfiguration to divide into two separate flats while retaining their current residential use class.

These proposed modifications align with the broader vision for the development, ensuring that each space continues to serve its intended purpose within the appropriate planning classifications.

### **3.2 Existing Site Layout**

The development site is fully build up within its boundaries.

The building along Waterloo Street are aligned with the main street frontage. While the existing front of the project's building at Palmer Street is recessed from the terraced building line by approx. 5 m, and aligns with the garages along access lane off Palmer Street.

No existing landscaping on site.

One off-street parking space is located in front of 66 Palmer Street entrance, within the depth of the recess from Palmer Street terraced houses.

There is an old existing steel beam barrier placed at the back exit of 14 Waterloo property (along the access lane, off Palmer Street), adjacent to the facade, preventing vehicles from damaging the building while turning into the access lane. The barrier is partially blocking the doorway, making it impossible to fully use the access door. It is also too close to the building elevation and is aesthetically disturbing.



*Existing steel beam barrier at the back of 14 Waterloo Street.*

### 3.3 Accessibility

Due to nature of the functions within the project and multiple disconnected spaces, there are several existing entrances leading to different parts of the buildings:

- a. Main Men Entrance to existing Mosque from Palmer Street - entrance for Men only, with separate shoe racks and ablution/toilet facilities.
- b. Main Entrance to newly purchased property from Palmer Street - entrance to a new building, that is disconnected on the ground floor from the existing mosque space.
- c. Main Women Entrance (Mosque) from Waterloo Street - entrance for Women only, with separate shoe racks and ablution/toilet facilities.
- d. Entrance to the accommodation from Waterloo Street - direct access to accommodation that is on the 1st and 2nd floor in the building.
- e. Main Waterloo Street Entrance to the newly purchased property - direct access from the street frontage to the ground floor open space.



*Diagram of existing site/building access points.*



Internally, the existing facilities and the purchased property are connected only by a small door on the first floor, and each space has its own internal staircase. The existing setting, especially the men section of the mosque, is not functional at all in its current state. The flow of internal circulation is spatially divided, and two main entrances from Palmer Street are confusing and not practical. Also there are no toilet/ablution facilities from the entrance "b.", and the division of prayer spaces separates community members, making it impossible to physically pray together.

The accommodation located on the 1st and 2nd floor is accessed via separate staircase, from the Waterloo Street. Currently the dwelling rooms, kitchens and bathrooms are scattered across the floors, connected with an open staircase, and it is not possible to conveniently provide privacy and descent living conditions to Imam of the mosque (religious leader) and his family.

### **3. DESIGN PROPOSAL**

#### **3.1 Design Objectives**

##### **Vision**

The overarching vision for this project is to establish a centre for worship and community activities that allows them expression of identity and presence, while visually and functionally contributing to the urban context of central Weston-Super-Mare. The design is carefully tailored to the needs of the community, with spaces thoughtfully arranged, adapted, and reorganized to accommodate their programme and functional requirements, ensuring a place that is both welcoming and practical for worship, education, and social engagement.

Each aspect of the project's planning, construction, and operation is informed by the following core objectives:

- **Create a unified architectural presence that respects the character of Weston-super-Mare.**  
By harmonizing building materials, scale, and massing with surrounding structures, the design responds sensitively to the local context. The exterior façades and rooflines are thoughtfully composed to enhance street presence without overwhelming adjacent properties.
- **Provide facilities for worship, education, and community engagement**  
The internal layout and building systems are optimized to support a diverse range of activities, from daily prayers and community gatherings to educational programs and cultural events. Modern technologies—such as advanced heating, ventilation, and audio systems—enhance comfort, accessibility, and user experience. Flexible spaces are incorporated to accommodate evolving needs, ensuring the facility remains a sustainable and vibrant hub for social and spiritual connection.
- **Foster inclusivity through thoughtful spatial planning and accessibility enhancements**  
From the earliest design stages, the layout addresses diverse user needs, ensuring easy patterns of routes and clear pathways. Accessible ablution facilities, restrooms, and prayer areas uphold convenience for all visitors, including those with limited mobility. By emphasizing intuitive wayfinding, user-friendly design, and clear circulation patterns, the proposal creates a welcoming and inclusive environment that reflects the community's values and aspirations.

##### **Key Goals**

- **Cultural Expression**  
A key objective is to celebrate Islamic architectural heritage through contemporary design interpretations. Geometric patterns, carefully proportioned arches, and subtle decorative motifs evoke a sense of cultural identity while remaining attuned to modern materials and construction methods. This approach creates a visually distinctive environment that tributes to function, yet aligns with the broader architectural language.
- **Sustainability**  
Recognizing environmental responsibility, the project incorporates strategies that reduce energy consumption and resource use over the building's lifespan.

- **Enhanced Functionality**

The proposed design emphasizes a logical flow between various functions—prayer, ablution, educational, and community spaces—to ensure that all users can navigate the facility with ease. This involves thoughtful placement of entrances, corridors, and gathering areas, reducing congestion and enhancing accessibility. The result is a building that accommodates worship services, social gatherings, and educational programs in a manner that optimizes both comfort and operational efficiency.

- **Community Integration**

The scheme is intended to foster a positive relationship with the surrounding neighbourhood by providing inviting, public-facing features and activities. Pedestrian-friendly access points help to create a welcoming atmosphere that encourages interaction with passersby. By integrating communal spaces and engaging with locals, the development aspires to function not only as a centre of worship, but also as a catalyst for social and cultural exchange.

### 3.2. Proposed Site Use

The proposal makes more efficient use of the site by opening up and connecting internal areas between the three properties: no 66 Palmer St, 16 Waterloo Street and no 14 Waterloo St, keeping the same function of facilities while expanding internally into more functional spaces.



*Proposed site use diagram.*

The spaces in the proposed Weston Islamic Education Centre include:

a. Designated Mosque areas for Men and Women

**Prayer Spaces:** Separate prayer areas for men and women are designed with respect to privacy and religious practices, ensuring comfort and spiritual tranquillity. Each area is accessible from separate entrances, with clear signage guiding the way. Soundproofing and high-quality audio systems ensure that calls to prayer and religious services are clearly audible within each space.

**Ablution Facilities:** Adjacent to the prayer areas are gender-specific ablution facilities. These areas are easily accessible, ensuring that community members can perform their rituals in a serene and hygienic environment.

b. Other Mosque facilities

**Office spaces** on the 1st floor is of adequate size for administrative works. The dedicated space includes a small bathroom and storage area. It can be accessed from the back of the prayer hall on the 1st floor, or directly from the staircase that leads to the accommodation and proposed fire exit.

**Mortuary/Ghusl:** Dedicated room on the ground floor, with a direct access from Palmer Street that is designed to allow for a religious preparation of deceased bodies, before their funeral and burial. (This service is not a business model and the facility is provided entirely free of charge as an act of charity to support the community.)

c. Community Spaces

The community centre accessed directly from Waterloo Street features rooms designed to accommodate a wide range of activities, from educational programs and workshops to social gatherings and events. These spaces are equipped with movable partitions, allowing for easy customization according to the size and nature of the activity.

d. Accommodation

Two self-contained flats, on the upper floors with a direct access from the Waterloo Street, that will serve as accommodation for the religious personnel of the Mosque and Weston Islamic Education Centre. While their access is separated from the Islamic Centre, there is a direct passage connecting the main apartment's staircase and the mosque facilities on the 1st floor.

(The flats are a necessary part of the Mosque and Islamic Education Centre, providing separate accommodation for Imam with his family, and other members of the community. The flats are characterized by having their own separate access from Waterloo Street.)

### 3.3. Proposed Site Layout

Since the development site is fully build up within its boundaries and the existing floor space across all buildings compartments is sufficient. The project does not propose additional floor space, nor increases

the Gross Internal Area. The proposal uses existing available areas to reorganise, combine or divide spaces to create the most functional layout for the community.

Also, there is no landscaping within the site perimeter.

In the corner of the newly acquired property, there is an existing steel beam barrier installed as a protective measure against vehicular impact. However, this barrier is both visually unappealing and obstructive to the implementation of the proposed new elevation. As part of the renovation works, the applicant seeks permission to remove the existing metal barrier and replace it with a series of robust and aesthetically appropriate bollards. These bollards will not only enhance the visual appeal of the site but also provide effective protection for vehicles, the building of Weston Islamic Education Centre, and the surrounding environment, ensuring a cohesive and well-integrated design in line with the proposed improvements.

### **3.4. Appearance**

Side boundaries are tangent with varied neighbouring structures - commercial, garages and residential buildings of different heights and form. The main buildings at Palmer Street are recessed from the terraced building line, and align with the garages along access lane off Palmer Street.

In response to such specific site conditions, the proposal is envisioned as a focal point in the streetscape, adding definition to that end of the Palmer Street section. The proposed design will introduce a higher degree of order and cohesion to the street. The design aims to:

**Articulate a Clear Identity:** Through a distinctive architectural identity and a defined public realm, the building will serve as a cultural and civic focal point.

**Integrate with the Context:** Defined character, and thoughtful design and material choice will help integrate the Weston Islamic Centre into the existing urban fabric, while also elevating the overall quality of the neighbourhood environment.

**Promote Community Interaction:** The design includes flexible spaces for community activities and gatherings, fostering social cohesion

This sensible intervention is expected to not only address the current disjointed appearance of the site but also set a precedent for future developments in the area, contributing positively to the identity and functionality of the local environment.

#### **3.4.1. Unified Elevation**

Since the site of proposal benefits from two main street frontages in two different contexts, the proposed building appearance of both facades vary.

Facade of 14 & 16 Waterloo Street - the proposal does not change the existing Victorian stone facade on the 1st and 2nd floor. The existing ground floor frontage of 16 Waterloo Street (entrance to accommodation and women's section entrance/windows) and 14 Waterloo Street (fully glazed corner retail frontage) will remain unchanged in form and finish.



**As part of the proposed development, new signage will be installed above each entrance to appropriately reflect the revised community functions on site. This will enhance wayfinding for visitors to the Mosque and Islamic Education Centre, ensuring clarity of access and usability.**

Façade of 66 Palmer Street - The two buildings, both the existing structure and the recently acquired adjacent property, currently feature a rather plain, typical façade of industrial look. To revitalise and unify the exterior, the design approach involves reimagining the window and door openings as practical, contemporary arches, carefully arranged and scaled to create visual rhythm.

By elevating a delicate horizontal line on the elevation, the design imparts a sense of increased height and prominence to the arches on the ground level, giving the overall façade a more vertical and elongated presence on the street. It helps establish the mosque's identity as an architectural feature within the streetscape.

Since the existing facade is divided into two adjacent buildings of industrial look, with two separate entrances, different window sizes and roof typology, the proposal aims to create a visually unified, organised and proportionate frontage.

The design harmonizes the two buildings through:

- a combined elevation featuring contemporary interpretations of repetitive arches and geometric patterns - a rhythm of scaled arches helps in mitigating varied window and door sizing to create visual unity;
- an enhanced composition of openings with purposeful definition - framing of existing openings in arched recess while adding some arched recess with no openings inside, forms rhythmic composition that has a strong visual integrity. Also, some openings have been adjusted to bring more natural light, according to their function and importance;
- a prominent well defined main entrance, creating a welcoming and inclusive facade;

The proposed design is carefully considered to remain subservient to its immediate context, responding sensitively to building heights, streetscape appearance, and street-view angles. The elevation is largely hidden from the view from earlier section of Palmer Street, because of the setback from the terraced houses. Additionally, the proposed structure is lower than the majority of surrounding buildings, with varying front wall heights and roof types affecting the perception of the frontage as one unified, prominent facility for the South-West community.

Despite this restraint in scale, the proposed frontage is situated at a key corner location—where North Street meets Palmer Street—forming a focal point for both pedestrians and vehicles approaching from North Street. The elevation design at Palmer Street carefully responds to this complex urban setting through:

- Tiled external wall finish – Drawing from the pattern of brick and stone prevalent in the immediate surroundings, the tile finish subtly highlights the significance of the building's function. Unlike the rear facades of High Street buildings, which are predominantly service-oriented or finished in plain render, the tile cladding transforms what was previously perceived as a 'rear elevation' into a distinct and inviting main entrance.

- Frontage heights for proportional balance – To create a visually coherent streetscape, the parapet wall of the existing building and the gable wall of the newly acquired property are raised slightly to create a representation of Islamic arch (without altering existing roof heights). This adjustment helps mitigate the height differences with adjacent terraced housing and existing residential buildings at the rear, ensuring a balanced and harmonious composition.
- Raised roof light – Introducing a raised roof light that follow the introduced arches in form of the openings and its chamfered sides, within the entire façade
- Metal cladding – Used selectively, mostly on the raised roof light structure, metal cladding provides a contemporary contrast while maintaining a material language that aligns with the site’s industrial and urban context.
- Defined entrance with clear wayfinding – The main entrance is designed to be visually prominent yet welcoming, ensuring ease of access while maintaining a sense of security. The positioning and articulation of the doorway emphasize its role as the primary access point.
- Subtle lighting strategy – External lighting will be used strategically to highlight key architectural elements without causing light pollution or disturbance to the surrounding residential properties.
- Improved pedestrian connectivity – The access is designed to provide a smooth, inclusive transition from the surrounding streets, ensuring accessibility for all users, including those with mobility challenges.

This considered approach ensures that the proposal integrates seamlessly into the urban fabric while maintaining its distinct function as a place of worship and community gathering. The design remains sensitive to its surroundings while subtly reinforcing the significance of the Mosque and Islamic Education Centre as an important community hub.

### **3.4.2.Architectural Identity**

It is important for the community that this cultural hub, which is the biggest in a wider area, to become a building that reflect its function - Islamic Education Centre and Mosque. Since the community gathers people from varied cultural backgrounds, they need a place that brings them closer together and reminds them of their distant homelands. In this sense architecture acts as a medium in connecting people spiritually and gives them a sense of belongingness. The submitted proposal explores the transformation of existing places into a united hub, using external and internal architectural features to create a unique space for the community with religious Islamic principles and modern Islamic aesthetics in its objectives, while respecting the site specific context.

Apart from bringing architectural identity to the main frontage design at Palmer Street, the proposal focuses also on internal layout and spatial features.

- arched openings - the prayer spaces on both floors are opened up and connected through arched openings, echoing the arched window recess on the facade and traditional Islamic architecture.
- raised roof light - Above the main prayer hall on the first floor, where Imam leads the prayers, a raised roof light measuring (5.7m x 7m) has been introduced to symbolize a dome—a characteristic of traditional Islamic mosque architecture. Although the building itself features a flat roof, the carefully contoured geometry of this roof light, subtly evokes the dome’s silhouette, connecting the contemporary structure with its cultural and spiritual heritage. From

a functional perspective, the roof light channels ample natural daylight into the prayer hall, creating an uplifting interior atmosphere that enhances the worship experience. Moreover it can assist with ventilation by allowing hot air to escape while drawing in fresh air.

The portion of the raised roof is offset from the terraced residential building, and raised above the existing flat roof level by 1,5 m - yet it remains subservient to the adjacent property and the streetscape. The raised roof light does not impact the sunlight access to the surrounding properties, nor does it cause loss of privacy, since the windows are on a height above roof level and cannot be accessed from the internal space.

### **3.5. Building Layout and Access**

#### **3.5.1. Building Layout**

The proposed internal reconfiguration is designed to optimize functionality, circulation, and user experience, ensuring that each area serves its intended purpose effectively while fostering a welcoming atmosphere. Key components are as follows:

#### **Mosque and Islamic Education Centre**

##### **a. Prayer Spaces**

Separate prayer halls for men and women collectively accommodate up to 371 worshippers on the ground and first floor. The prayer capacity for each space is as follow:

- a total Men's prayer capacity of 300
- a total Women's prayer capacity of 35
- a small separate prayer room on the GF with capacity of 8
- an additional prayer capacity of multifunctional room on the GF of 28

This division upholds cultural and spiritual customs while preserving privacy and comfort. Strategic placement of entrances and passages facilitates smooth crowd movement. The areas between existing and new buildings have been opened up to create visually and physically connected open plan spaces for worship. Some use of movable partition system allows to adjust spatial subdivision between men and women according to the need.

New internal staircase is proposed, instead of the existing ones. It is proposed in a strategic location that creates better circulation, especially while the prayer halls are filling up quickly row by row, starting from the end closest to the Mihrab and Imam.

One small, separate prayer room is proposed, featuring secure and direct access from Palmer Street. This space will provide inclusive access to a worship area, complete with a small ablution and toilet facility, for use outside the main opening hours of the Mosque and Islamic Education Centre.

To ensure safety and security, the access will be controlled via controlled entry door and CCTV monitoring to promote a safe environment for all users.

b. Ablution and toilets

The ablution area comprises of 9 well-appointed units: 6 units for men, 2 units for women and 1 unit in the separate prayer room, designed for efficient flow and hygiene. Durable, water-resistant finishes and appropriate drainage systems reduce maintenance needs, while clear wayfinding ensures congregants can access these facilities without disrupting other building activities. The layout also incorporates unobtrusive transitions between ablution areas and prayer halls, maintaining a sense of modesty.

Men ablution and toilet facilities are kept at their existing location with minor amendments. Women ablution and toilet facilities are relocated to the area near their exclusive entrance with shoe racks, for more practical spatial organisation and clear definition of *clean* and *dirty* zones.

Toilets for the prayer facilities are located around ablution areas for an easy and direct access, while other toilets are located near their dedicated facilities. There are 2 toilets and a toilet/shower room for men prayer facilities, 1 toilet for women prayer facilities, 1 shared disabled toilet for the community centre facilities, 1 toilet for the separate prayer room and 1 toilet/shower room for the office area.

c. Community Centre

Multiple flexible spaces cater to a range of educational, cultural, and social events. Adaptable partitions and furniture configurations allow for easy reorganization of these rooms, maximizing functionality for classes, workshops, or community meetings. The space benefits from a wide retail glazed storefront along Waterloo Street, and some activities provided will be aimed to encouraged wider audience and invite other local communities.

Additionally, the space is equipped with a proposed kitchenette and storage areas. It has an access to disabled toilet.

It is also connected with the prayer spaces by a door at the back, and a corridor around men prayer hall to allow access to communal kitchen facility.

A community kitchen facility (bigger than the former small kitchen) is proposed with an access from the central part of the spaces. It is dedicated for internal use within the Mosque and Islamic Education Centre.

d. Ghusl / Mortuary

A dedicated area is provided for funeral rites (ghusl), with direct access for hearses to maintain privacy. This space is connected to the mosque in a way that respects religious customs and facilitates the smooth flow of people during sensitive times. Hygienic finishes and carefully planned circulation patterns ensure that the facility meets all relevant health, safety, and cultural requirements.

This space is used only occasionally, and serves the Muslim community only, and the service is free of charge.

e. Mosque Office Rooms

The proposed office rooms are located on the 1st floor and can be accessed via a back door on the 1st floor main prayer hall or directly from the staircase leading to the accommodation. The space consist of two office rooms with a shared toilet/shower facility.

Overall, this layout promotes a harmonious balance between spiritual needs and community engagement. By integrating efficient circulation routes, thoughtful adjacencies, and strategic planning for future flexibility, the design responds to the mosque's evolving role as a centre of worship, education, and social connection.

### **Mosque Accommodation**

Existing dwelling areas are accessed from Waterloo Street via separate entrance. Habitable spaces are scattered among 4 different levels in the building, and connected with an open internal staircase. The spaces are greatly underutilised - within an area of around 175 sqm, currently there are only two bedrooms (on the upper floor only), two bathrooms, two kitchens, two dining rooms, and a very large living space. All rooms are open directly to the common staircase, which amplifies any sounds and noise. Allocation of different rooms on varied levels connected by an open staircase is not practical and deprives users from privacy.

The proposal aims to define the habitable spaces, minimise level differences, provide necessary privacy and make more efficient use of the available areas.

The proposal subdivides available areas into:

a. 1st floor Accommodation

The space that currently is being used as a large living space and a dining room, and has a total area of 60 sqm, without the staircase, is proposed to be rearranged as a 2-bedroom accommodation, with all amenities on one level and a defined, secure entrance from the staircase.

b. 2nd floor Accommodation

The existing area on the upper floors is currently split into two levels - lower one with a kitchen, bathroom and access to an existing roof top, and upper level with two double bedrooms and a dining area. The spaces make up a total of around 80 sqm, without the staircase. The proposal keeps the existing kitchen and bathroom with an existing roof top. The upper level is proposed to be subdivided into 2 bedrooms and a study room, storage area and an open plan living/dining space. Secure entrance to this accommodation is proposed on the staircase landing, before the entrance to the kitchen/bathroom area, to ensure privacy. The top of the staircase (the last flight consisting of 6 steps) is proposed to be enclosed with stud walls or other light partition, and included in the accommodation area.



### **3.5.1.Access**

The existing entrances are maintained, with a clear redefinition of their function and importance, while an additional access to the morgue is provided from Palmer Street.

Due to the nature of the proposed functions within the project, there are several entrances leading to different parts of the buildings:

- a. Main Men Entrance (Mosque) from Palmer Street -as existing - entrance for Men only, with separate shoe racks and ablution/toilet facilities.
- b. Additional Entrance/Fire Exit (Mosque) from Palmer Street -existing with a change of function- entrance to an additional, separated small prayer space that will remain securely accessible after hours.
- c. Mortuary/Ghusl Access -as proposed - direct access to dedicated morgue area, allowing a convenient drop off spot for hearse and separate hygienic way to enter/exit the building.
- d. Main Women Entrance (Mosque) from Waterloo Street -as existing- entrance for Women only, with separate shoe racks and ablution/toilet facilities.
- e. Entrance to the accommodation from Waterloo Street - as existing - direct access to the staff accommodation that is on the 1st and 2nd floor in the building.
- f. Main Islamic Education Centre Entrance - as existing- direct access from the Waterloo Street frontage to the ground floor community facilities.

## **4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ECO-FRIENDLY FEATURES**

Aiming to create a development that serves the community's needs while contributing positively to the environment and setting a new standard for sustainable design of mosques and Islamic community centres, as an approach varied eco-friendly features and design strategies have been implemented:

### **4.1 Efficient Use of Space**

Proposed building is designed to maximise space use. Prayer rooms are internally connected with community building facilities, providing possibility to use the spaces also for other activities. Community centre spaces are designed to be flexible, with open plan and movable partitions.

### **4.2 Natural Light**

The proposed building has been designed with a concept of optimal sunlight, while considering the functions of spaces. Existing windows has been maintained within proposal, including existing roof lights that bring natural light into the ground floor prayer spaces. Several windows have been proposed to increase natural light, including the raised roof light structure above the main prayer hall.

#### 4.3 Natural Ventilation

Spaces are designed with dual aspect openings for better light quality and natural ventilation. Majority of the windows are openable, allowing natural air circulation.

#### 4.4 Renewable energy

The proposed design incorporates photovoltaic (PV) panels to harness solar energy, a clean and renewable resource. The PV panels will generate a significant portion of the building's electricity needs, reducing reliance on non-renewable energy sources, thus contributing to the building's overall energy efficiency.

#### 4.5 Waste management plan

The Weston Islamic Education Centre currently generates a minimal amount of waste. Waste is regularly collected in a designated wheelie bin stored within the property. Every Friday morning, this bin is placed on the street for collection. The collection point is at the corner of the building on Palmer Street, where it is recessed approximately 5 meters from the terraced building line to align with the adjacent garages.

In Islamic special time of the year, there is more waste generated and usually volunteers collect and dispose the extra waste domestically. During the month of Ramadan, people break their fast and pray for longer hours. Usually food is provided and the food provider collect the waste as well. So it is always a smooth process without any issues.

The waste collection will adapt based on changing needs. Yet the community is dedicated to implement sustainable solutions. The new proposed building will provide bigger prayer capacity, but the use of space for daily prayers should not drastically increase generated waste. Nevertheless in case there will be a need for a regular waste collection, long term and sustainable solutions will be definitely implemented to maintain efficiency and environmental responsibility.

Regarding the existing residential accommodation within the building, direct access to Palmer Street is not possible. The only existing internal route passes through the prayer hall, which is a designated as clean zone where footwear is not permitted, and ritual ablutions are performed before prayer. As such, waste from residential floors cannot be transported through these areas. Instead the waste is dispose of their waste via the same system and collected weekly from Waterloo Street.

This approach ensures that waste management remains efficient, compliant with religious practices, and adaptable to the evolving needs of the growing community.

## 5. PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

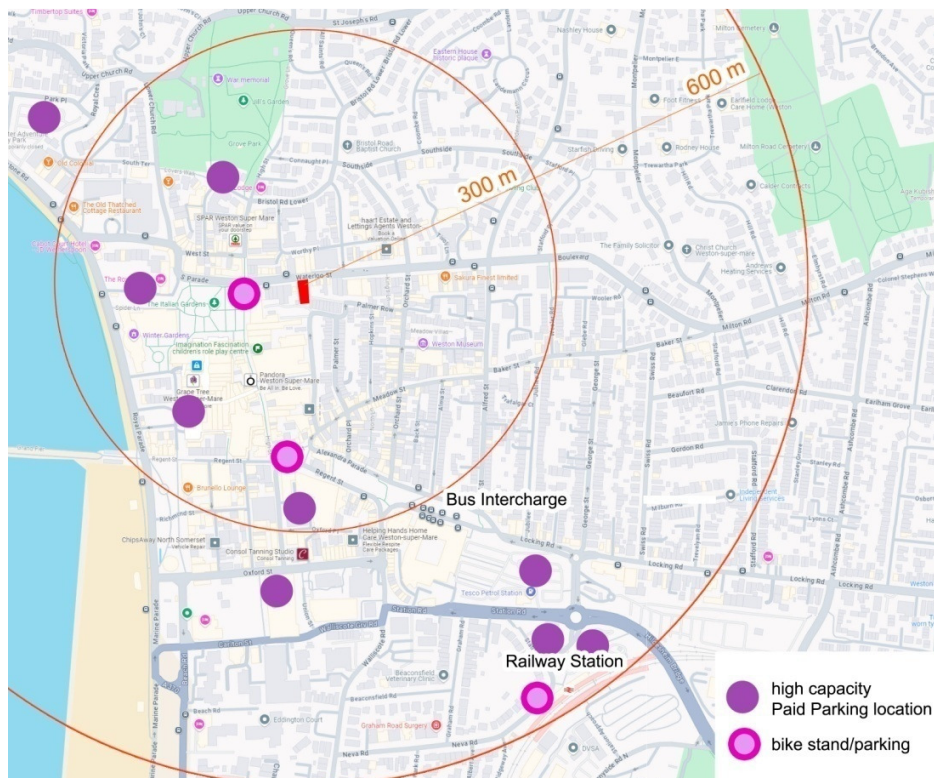
The proposed development is strategically located near Weston-super-Mare's town centre, offering convenient access to various transport and parking options. A single designated parking space is available at the site entrance, while the overall access strategy prioritises safety, efficiency, and sustainability. The community actively promotes the use of sustainable transport modes, aligning with broader environmental and mobility goals.

To further support accessibility while minimising traffic congestion, visitors are encouraged to utilise nearby paid parking facilities, public transport, carpooling, and other sustainable travel options. These initiatives align with local council policies promoting inclusive and eco-friendly mobility solutions.

Walking to the mosque is inherently encouraged within Islamic teachings, inspired by the Prophet's (peace be upon him) guidance that each step taken towards the mosque earns spiritual reward (hasanat). This belief resonates with many attendees, motivating them to walk whenever possible. Beyond its religious significance, walking contributes to reducing environmental impact and fosters a sense of community and mindfulness.

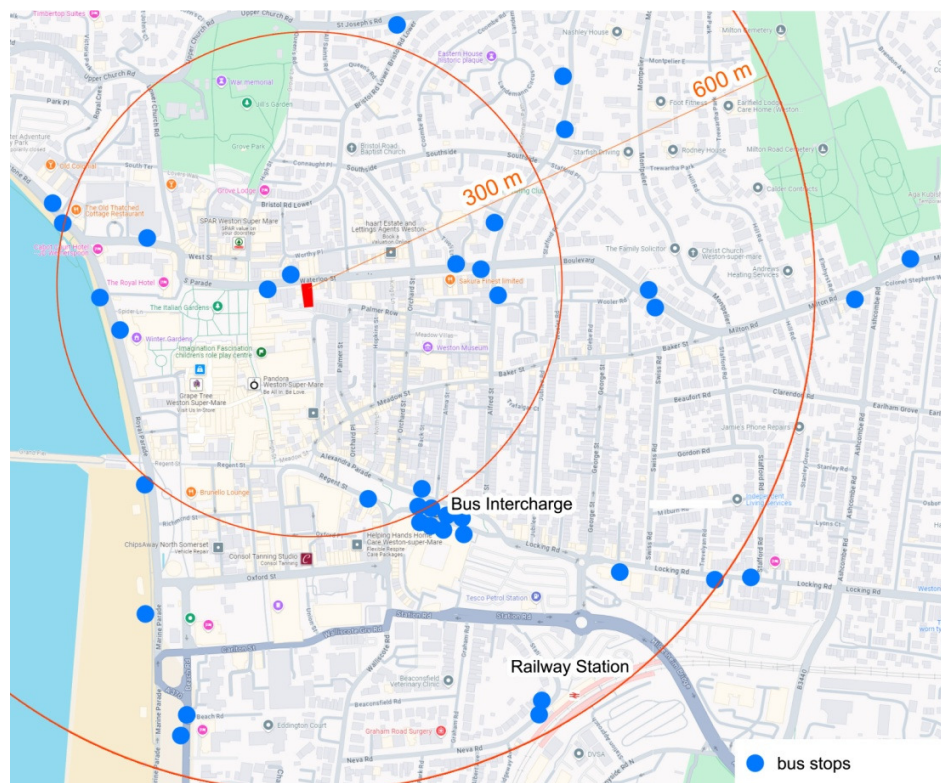
Additionally, the Weston Islamic Education Centre actively manages traffic flow during peak periods, such as Ramadan and other significant events. When necessary, arrangements are made with the neighbouring food bank to utilise their parking facilities at night, ensuring a practical and coordinated approach to managing increased vehicle demand.

### 5.1 Nearby Parking Provisions



- **Paid Car Parks**-multiple pay-and-display, high capacity parking are within short walking distance (less than 0.5 mile/10min), including:
  - parking beside The Royal Hotel
  - The Sovereign Shopping Centre Car Park
  - NCP Weston Super Mare High Street
  - Carlton Street Car Park
  - Grove Car Park
  - Melrose Car Park
- **On-street Parking** available within short walking distance (less than 0.5 mile/10min) :
  - Waterloo Street
  - Boulevard
  - North Street
  - Palmer Street
  - Grove Park on-street parking
  - Orchard Street
  - Bristol Road Lower
  - Langton Grove Road

## 5.2 Public Transport Links



- **Local Bus Services:** Several local bus routes serve the Weston-Super-Mare town centre, with stops situated conveniently along Waterloo Street and Seaside Promenade. Timetables and route maps will be displayed inside Mosque and Islamic Education Centre to encourage greater use of public transport.
- **Bus Station:** Interchange Bus Stops at Locking Road/Regent Street are only 0.3 mile away - 6min walking distance, offers connection for visitors from outside Weston-super-Mare.
- **Railway Station:** Weston-Super-Mare Railway Station is only 0.5 mile away - 12min walking distance, offers an alternative for those travelling from outside the immediate area, connecting distant destination from around South West and beyond.

### 5.3.Cycling

The location is well accessible within cycle friendly routes via some minor roads as well as traffic free cycle route on the seaside promenade, making it easy to access for those who prefer cycling.

The site is fully build up, with no landscaping to provide on-site bike racks, yet it benefits from a central location and existing cycle parking available within less than 10min of walking distance:

- bike stands on the intersection of Waterloo Street and High Street
- bike stands on the intersection of Regent Street and High Street
- bike storage facility at the Railway Station

### 6.0 Summary

#### Conclusion

The renovation and expansion of Weston-super-Mare Mosque and Islamic Education Centre reflect a forward-thinking approach to community development. This proposal seeks to enhance the functionality and flexibility of existing spaces, ensuring that the buildings are adapted thoughtfully without drastic changes to the immediate context.

A strong emphasis is placed on sustainability, integrating energy-efficient solutions and promoting alternative modes of transportation to reduce environmental impact. Additionally, the project aspires to create an open and inviting community space, fostering engagement between the Muslim community and the wider public.

As an important place of worship, learning, and social connection for a small but growing community in a prominent location, this development will serve as a beacon of inclusivity, sustainability, and cultural expression for years to come.

We respectfully request the Council's favourable consideration of this application.