
2025/0020

BMBC

24 - 32 Cheapside, Barnsley, S70 1RR

Amalgamation of 2no. retail units.

This application is being brought before members as it has been made by the Council.

Site Description

The application relates to a four-storey commercial building in Barnsley Town Centre bounded by Cheapside to the east, Albert Street East to the south, Albert Street to the west and Queen Street South to the north. The Glass Works is located to the east and opposite the application building and the Alhambra Shopping Centre is located to the south-east. The application building once served as a department store, but since their departure, the building was subdivided into and has continued to serve as smaller units occupied by various retailers at ground and first floor levels. A Snooker Hall previously occupied the third floor, and the second floor has predominantly been used as ancillary storage and welfare for the retail units.

Prior to the opening of the Glass Works, 24-32 Cheapside had 3no. retail tenants. Unit A provided an entrance to Sports Direct, which was located on the first floor; Unit B was occupied by New Look and Superdrug occupied Unit C. In July 2022, both Sports Direct and New Look relocated to new units in the Glass Works, leaving Superdrug as the only remaining tenant.



Planning History

There is an extensive planning history associated with the development site dating back to 1975. However, the most relevant applications are as follows:

1. B/75/3199/BA – Erection of shop with ancillary showrooms, restaurant or cafeteria, storerooms and offices. – Historic.
2. B/77/0790/BA – Installation of shop fronts. – Historic.
3. B/00/0844/BA – Installation of 3 No. shop fronts to allow sub-division of premises. – Approved.
4. B/01/0099/BA – Installation of new shop front and form new entrance to first floor. – Approved.
5. B/01/0545/BA – Change of use from retail to gymnasium (third floor level) and alteration to Albert Street frontage. – Approved.
6. B/01/0726/BA – Installation of new shop front. – Approved.
7. B/04/2269/BA – Change of use of 3rd floor from storage to call centre. – Approved.
8. 2006/0727 - Change of use of third floor storage area (Class B8) to private members pool and snooker club (Class D2). – Approved.

Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking permission for the amalgamation of 2no. retail units.

The proposal would involve the amalgamation of ground floor units, Unit B and Unit C only, to create a single, larger retail unit. The change would be facilitated by internal alterations only and the existing shopfronts would be retained. Any potential alterations to the shopfronts are to be considered under a separate future planning application.



Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the current development plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise; the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment, and mixed-use sites). In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies which are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at a full Council meeting held 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering on its objectives. This means, no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review, which is due to take place in 2027, or earlier, if circumstances require it.

Local Plan Allocation – Town Centre

The site is located within Barnsley Town Centre in the Market Area District. Therefore, the following policies are relevant:

- **Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development.**
- **Policy TC1: Town Centres.**
- **Policy TC2: Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages.**
- **Policy BTC12: The Markets Area District.**
- **Policy GD1: General Development.**
- **Policy POLL1: Pollution Control and Protection.**
- **Policy D1: High quality design and place making.**
- **Policy T3: New Development and Sustainable Travel.**
- **Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety.**

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. The core of this is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Proposals that align with the Local Plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In respect of this application, relevant sections include:

- **Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy.**

Paragraph 85. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

- **Section 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres.**

Paragraph 90(a). Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should: a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters.

– **Section 12: Achieving well designed places.**

Consultations

Highways Development Control	<i>No objections.</i>
Waste Management	<i>No comments.</i>
Pollution Control	<i>This development has a low potential to have an adverse impact on health and the quality of life of those living and/or working in the locality, so approval is recommended.</i>
Enterprising Barnsley	<i>Enterprising Barnsley support the proposed application that will seek to improve the retail space range and configuration of accommodation in the town centre to help attract future occupiers and create jobs. The newly designed unit will provide dedicated floorspace that can help attract new occupiers to the town centre producing a floorplate size that is currently unavailable in the town centre marketplace.</i>
Conservation Officer	<i>No objections.</i>
Local Ward Councillors	<i>No comments.</i>

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties. A site notice was placed nearby, expiring 7th February 2025. No representations were received.

Assessment

Principle of Development

A planning statement states that Barnsley MBC Property Services are seeking approval to combine 2no. existing retail units into 1no. larger retail unit with a view to attracting a medium-sized national retailer to further bolster the current retail offer in the town centre. The addition of the Glass Works has resulted in several national retailers relocating from other premises within the town centre to take advantage of new purpose-built units alongside similar sized retailers. Whilst some of the existing units, both on Cheapside and in the Alhambra Shopping Centre, have been taken over by new tenants, there are a few shop units that have remained vacant. The Council's estates team have been working with commercial agents to produce a strategy for attracting new retailers to the town to backfill the vacant units. 24-32 Cheapside has been reviewed as part of this process.

Barnsley Town Centre is the dominant urban centre within the borough; to ensure that it continues to fulfil its sub-regional role, support will be given to applications if the proposals would maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centre. The development site is located in the Markets Area District of Barnsley Town Centre. The Markets Area District forms a primary shopping area, and it is intended that this district remains the focus of retail activity within the Town Centre. The development site is also a primary shopping frontage and therefore proposals for retail uses are appropriate and will be allowed provided that within each primary shopping frontage, ground floor uses would remain predominantly retail. Other uses may be acceptable where they diversify and improve provision in a

centre, if it can be demonstrated that the vitality and viability of the primary shopping area concerned would not be negatively affected and that ground floor uses on the primary shopping frontages would remain predominantly retail in nature.

Any proposal will also be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.

The proposed amalgamation of existing retail units has led to the Council taking the decision to serve notice on Superdrug, although it is intended to retain Superdrug within the town centre. This decision was taken after an exercise to produce a strategy for attracting new retailers to the town to backfill vacant units identified that the current ground floor configuration is no longer attractive to retailers, as evidenced by its long-term vacancy and increasing the ground floor plate would vastly improve the marketability of the premises by providing a larger trading area and a dominant high street shop front presence which would complement the Glass Works development. The proposal would also widen the pool of retailers which the Council is able to target to occupy the space.

Considering the above, the proposal aims to promote the long-term vitality and viability of Barnsley Town Centre by allowing the centre to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, in accordance with paragraph 90(a) of the NPPF. Moreover, the proposal would ensure that Barnsley town Centre is able to fulfil its sub-regional role as the dominant urban centre within the borough, in accordance with Local Plan Policy TC1. The proposal would also maintain a retail presence within a primary shopping area and on a primary shopping frontage in the Markets Area District, in accordance with Local Plan Policies, TC2 and BTC12. As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Visual Amenity

The proposed development would not be detrimental to visual amenity or the character of the street scene because the amalgamation of the ground floor units would be facilitated by internal alterations only, and the existing shopfronts would be retained. Any potential future alterations to the shopfronts and the installation of signage are to be considered under a separate future planning application and application for advertisement consent. As such, this is considered to weigh modestly in favour of the proposed development.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy D1: High Quality Design and Placemaking and is considered acceptable regarding visual amenity.

Residential Amenity

The proposed development is unlikely to have an adverse impact on health and the quality of life of those living and/or working in the locality. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the proposal has the potential to cause some minor nuisance and disturbance in the locality. Whilst any potential impacts are anticipated to be temporary, construction hours will be controlled by condition. Additionally, whilst the prospective tenant is not yet known, it is anticipated that the operation of the new amalgamated unit is not expected to vary from the current and previous occupations and the opening hours will be expected to be in line with other surrounding retailers. Any amendments required which relate to the specific operations of any prospective tenant are to be considered under a separate future planning application, if required, and as such, this is considered to weigh modestly in favour of the proposed development.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy GD1: General Development and Local Plan Policy POLL1: Pollution Control and Protection and is considered acceptable regarding residential amenity.

Highway Safety

The proposed development would not be prejudicial to highway safety; the existing site access would be retained, and Cheapside is well protected by traffic regulation orders which limit motorised vehicle access and loading times. Moreover, it is anticipated that the amalgamation of the ground floor units could yield a minor reduction in traffic movements as only one occupier would be receiving deliveries and having refuse collected. Additionally, Highways Development Control were consulted, and no objections were received. Furthermore, the development site is in a sustainable location and is easily accessible on foot, by car and with good access to public transport links and public car parking, and therefore, this is considered to weigh moderately in favour of the proposed development.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy T3: New Development and Sustainable Travel and Local Plan Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety and is considered acceptable regarding highway safety.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

A need has been identified by the Council to amalgamate Unit B and Unit C at 24-32 Cheapside to ensure that the Council is best placed to approach and attract more medium-sized national retailers to Barnsley Town Centre to backfill vacant units and provide a complimentary offer to the Glass Works development and Alhambra Shopping Centre. The proposed amalgamation of the existing retail units aims to promote the long-term vitality and viability of Barnsley Town Centre by allowing the centre to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries and allowing the centre to fulfil its sub-regional role as the dominant urban centre within the borough. As such, this application is recommended for approval.

**Recommendation -
Approve with Conditions**