
2022/0826

Applicant: YMCA

Construction of car park and 2m high weld mesh fence

Land adjacent YMCA Barnsley, 1 Blucher Street, Barnsley, S70 1AP

Site Description

The site, measuring 0.36km², is currently in use as greenspace adjacent to the West Way highway [A628]. The area is covered in grass and is restricted to pedestrian access only. There was evidence of rough sleeping upon visitation of the site and litter was highly visible underneath the trees and foliage on the northern and eastern boundaries. The existing car park is accessed via an alley between the Bridal Boutique and Barnsley Hospice Shop with the site hosting six car parking spaces and a small bin storage area. The eastern boundary is part composed of the rear elevation to the Salem Wesleyan Reform Church – a grade II listed building.

The site is designated as within the Town Centre in the Unitary Development Plan and as within the Southgate District of the Town Centre.





Relevant Site History

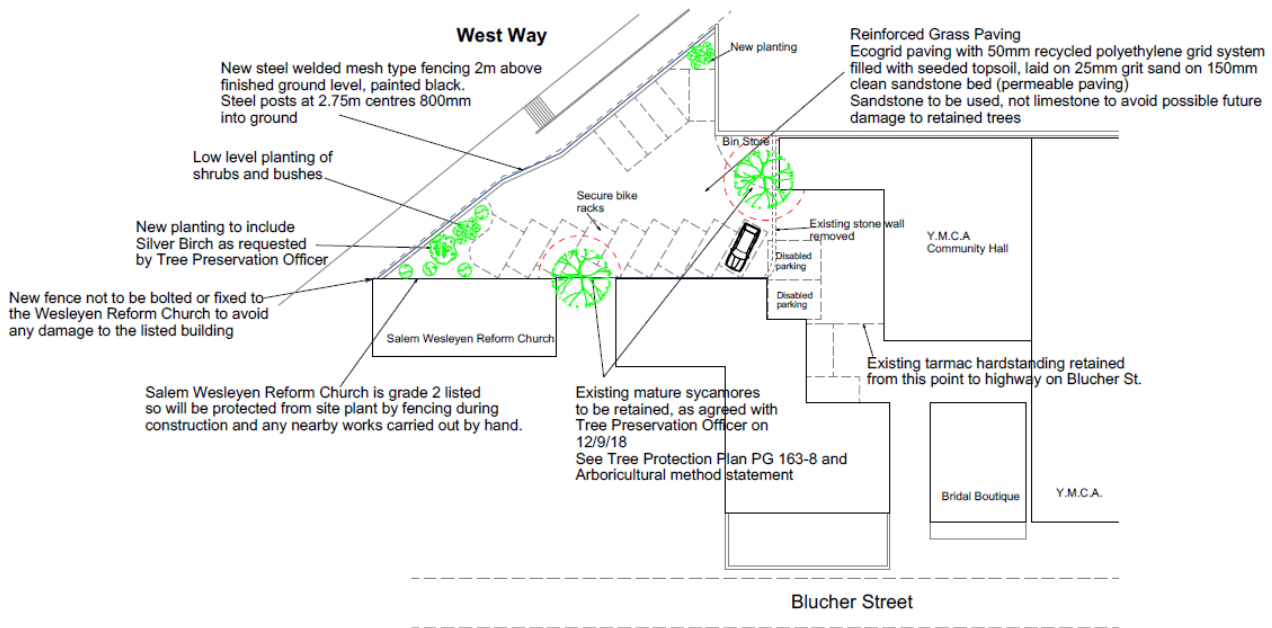
2018/1272 – Construction of car park and 2m high weld mesh fence (Approved with Conditions)

Proposed Development

The application is effectively a resubmission of application no. 2018/1272 due to the application time limit expiring.

The applicant is seeking approval for the creation of 14 car parking spaces (including 2 x disabled bays). The car park will be accessed via the existing entrance provided from Blucher Street between Barnsley Hospice Shop and the Bridal Boutique. The diagonal southwestern boundary will bear the erection of a 2m high weld mesh fence to prevent pedestrian access into the car park from the bridge and pavement area beside West Way. The stone wall treating the northern boundary is to be removed to provide access to the site as will two trees and several bushes. The lost trees and bushes will be replaced in the southern and western corners of the site. The new hard standing will be of a solid bound polyethylene ecogrid construction that is filled with seeded topsoil and laid on 25mm grit sand and a 150mm sandstone bed to provide a permeable surface as per the requirements of the relevant Highways Development Control and the Arboricultural Officer. The agent has confirmed that the main operation of the site will be during working hours which are 8am-5pm, but there are regular meetings which often run into the evening (9pm).

An amended plan has been submitted showing additional planting to the South of the site, tree protection barriers around the retained trees.



Proposed Site Plan

Scale 1:500

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Local Plan (adopted January 2019), alongside the Joint Waste Plan and relevant neighbourhood plans, form the statutory development plan for Barnsley. It establishes policies and proposals for the development and use of land up to the year 2033 and will be used when considering planning applications and to coordinate investment decisions that affect the towns, villages and countryside of Barnsley. The Local Plan supersedes the remaining saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (adopted in the year 2000) and the Core Strategy (adopted in 2011).

Local Plan

In reference to this application, the following policies are relevant:

GD1 – General Development – Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents.

D1 – High Quality Design and Place Making – Development is expected to be of a high quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

T4: New Development and Transport Safety – New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

Poll1: Pollution Control – Development will be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people. Developers will be expected to minimise the effects of any possible pollution and provide mitigation measures where appropriate.

BTC17: Southgate District – Development will be allowed for offices, residential development, assembly and leisure uses, hotel, food and drink uses and car parking within the Southgate District.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Parking

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, 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 Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In respect of this application, the policies above are considered to reflect the 4th Core Principle in the NPPF, which relates to high quality design and good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. They also reflect the advice in paragraph 124 (general design considerations) and paragraph 130, which state that 'permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'.

Consultations

Asset management – No comments

Conservation Officer – No objection but recommended further soft planting to screen from adjacent listed building.

Forestry Officer – The development makes use of sandstone and above ground construction, which is appropriate. It is suggested that tree protection measures will be required to avoid mechanical damage to the retained trees. The use of Silver Birch seems appropriate in this instance/location. Upon receipt of amended information showing the presence of tree protection measures on site, and an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), no objection was raised. It was recommended that the AMS is complied with.

Highway Drainage – No objections

Highways DC – The proposal is effectively the same as those previously approved under application number 2018/1272 and is considered acceptable subject to conditions.

Pollution Control – No objections

Yorkshire Water – No comment

Ward Councillors – No comment

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties and a site notice placed nearby. One comment was received which did not object to the proposal but raised slight concern about potential damage to the neighbouring property/land. The neighbour indicated that they would get in touch directly with the applicant to discuss these concerns.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The proposal is to provide an additional area of parking within the Southgate District of the Town Centre that will serve the YMCA building. Though parking will be ancillary to the YMCA and not generally open to the public, the site is in line with Town Centre Policy BTC17 which allows for the creation of new car parking amenity spaces within the Southgate District - on this basis the proposal is considered acceptable in principle.

Visual amenity and impact on Historic Environment

The provision of additional parking will result in the loss of a small greenspace within the town centre which will have a moderately negative visual effect upon this location within the Southgate District. Nevertheless, the area is not designated as greenspace within the emergent Local Plan, is small in size and lies adjacent to a main arterial route to the south of Barnsley Town Centre - all things considered the amenity space afforded by the green setting is cancelled out by its location and the aforementioned factors. Further, there are no benches or seating areas on the site that could contribute to enjoyment of the area and there is highly visible evidence of rough sleeping that displays the areas contribution to undesirable uses that erode the quality of Southgate.

There is a listed building directly adjacent to the site. The Conservation Officer has been consulted on the proposal and has not objected to the scheme stating that the impact on the listed asset is negligible but has requested additional planting to the South-East of the site. The agent agreed to additional planting and submitted an amended plan indicating additional landscaping, in line with the Conservation Officer's comments.

Some trees and shrubbery on site will be affected, though the arboricultural officer is satisfied with the submitted plans and the replacement of the foliage thereof. The conservation officer has also assessed the plans and does not object to the weth-meld fence in terms of its effect upon the setting of the listed asset. The function and character of the proposal is acceptable in that it is a typical use within the town centre and is therefore a valid form of development that will provide intensification of development in a town centre location. The loss of greenspace is regrettable but when balanced with the retention and replacement of vegetation as well as the permeable hard standing, the detrimental side effects of its loss are largely accounted for and ameliorated.

As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of visual amenity and in line with Local Plan Policies GD1, D1, TC1 and BTC17.

Residential Amenity

Whilst the proposal would result in an increase in traffic movements within and from the site, the number of parking spaces created is relatively modest and is within a dense urban environment where similar development has already occurred. As such, it is likely that an increase in parking provision would have a somewhat detrimental effect on the amenity of the surrounding residential area – especially with regard to the residential apartments located upon Nelson Street due to the intensification of movements at the rear of this development. However, the Southgate district is predominantly commercial and is therefore subject to high levels of vehicular movement from both West Way and Pitt Street such that the levels created by the introduction of 12 net additional parking spaces will not likely be overly detrimental or harmful. Moreover, the inclusion of a weld-mesh fence to provide security to the car park will have the added benefit of reducing rough-sleeping and misuse of the area while maintaining the majority of the vegetation upon the site. A welcome by-product of the development of the car park is that it is likely that the rear of the Nelson St residential apartments will be better secured from crime by preventing access from the greenspace – on balance it is considered that this increase in security offsets the increased vehicular movements that can be anticipated from development of the site. Lastly there is also the potential for surrounding businesses to benefit from on-street parking spaces that are made available by YMCA users utilising the new off-street provision.

In summary, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of residential amenity and in line with Local Plan Policies BTC17, GD1, and the SPD – Parking.

Impact on Trees

There were conditions on the previous approval which related to the need to submit tree protection measures and an arboricultural method statement. This information was submitted with the Tree Officer not raising any objection providing that the submitted AMS and amended plan (Revision G) being complied with. The proposed development is therefore acceptable in terms of the impact on the trees.

Highway Safety

The provision of additional parking will extend an existing car park and maintain the use of the existing access, this will allow for the safe manoeuvring of vehicles. The spaces meet the standard set out in SPD - Parking and will not have an adverse effect on highway safety. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions