

Design and Access Statement

May 2026



**Full Planning Application for the conversion of the existing building into 15
Self-Contained One-Bedroom Apartments**

At

St Matthews Building, High Street, Royston, Barnsley, S71 4RA

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement supports a full planning application for the conversion of the existing St Matthews Building, a former church currently in use as a dance studio, into 15 self-contained one-bedroom apartments.

The Statement has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, and follows the format suggested by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC).

2. Site and Surrounding Context

The site is located on High Street, Royston, within an established mixed-use area. The surrounding context is predominantly residential, with good access to local shops, services, and community facilities, all within walking distance.

Public transport provision is excellent, with nearby bus routes providing regular connections to Barnsley town centre and surrounding settlements. The area benefits from flat topography and well-lit pedestrian routes, providing good accessibility for all users.

The existing building retains its original church form, notable for its imposing brick construction, simple pitched tiled roof, arched windows, and symmetrical front elevation. Adjacent properties comprise a mixture of traditional brick / stone dwellings and small commercial units.

The existing building is not listed and it is not in a conservation area.

3. The Proposal

The proposal seeks to convert the existing building into 15 one-bedroom apartments without any external extensions. The conversion has been designed to retain the building's architectural character while providing high-quality residential accommodation.

Key elements of the proposal include:

- **Retention of the existing building envelope**, with only minor external alterations.
- **Respect for existing window openings and proportions**, with internal subdivision managed through **blanked panels within window frames** to preserve scale and visual balance.
- **Demolition of small, non-original lean-to outbuildings**, enabling a cleaner building footprint and improved architectural presentation.
- **Landscaping improvements** to the site perimeter, providing modest amenity and enhancing the street scene.
- **Covered cycle storage** for each apartment (15 spaces total), located securely on-site.
- **Provision for segregated refuse and recycling storage**, in accordance with BMBC waste management standards.
- **No on-site car parking**—however, the area benefits from ample unrestricted public parking and public transport alternatives.

4. Design Considerations

Layout and Internal Arrangement

Internal layouts have been designed to maximise natural light and space efficiency while respecting the building's structural layout. Circulation routes are simple, functional, and accessible.

Scale and Massing

No change is proposed to the massing, roof profile, or external footprint. The proposal respects the scale, height, and proportions of the original church, aligning with the surrounding townscape.

Appearance and Materials

The conversion will work *with* the building's historic fabric. Window alterations will be treated sensitively, maintaining original openings and rhythm. The removal of unsympathetic lean-to additions and general refurbishment will significantly enhance the building's visual quality and contribute positively to the character of High Street and the local conservation context.

5. Access and Movement

Vehicle Access and Parking

No on-site car parking is provided due to the constrained town centre setting. However, ample on-street and public parking exists within close proximity. This approach aligns with sustainable travel principles in Policy T3 (New Development and Sustainable Travel) and Policy T4 (New Development and Transport Safety) of the Barnsley Local Plan (2019).

Cycle and Pedestrian Access

Secure and covered cycle storage for all 15 apartments supports low-carbon travel consistent with Policy I1 (Infrastructure and Planning Obligations) and Policy D1 (High Quality Design and Place Making).

Public Transport

The site is well served by nearby bus routes on High Street, providing frequent services to Barnsley and surrounding districts, fulfilling Policy T3 objectives for accessible, sustainable locations.

6. Sustainability and Waste Management

The proposal promotes sustainable living through the reuse and adaptation of an existing building, minimising embodied carbon.

Dedicated, screened areas will accommodate segregated waste and recycling, collected in accordance with BMBC's waste collection arrangements.

Energy-efficient lighting and water-saving fixtures will be incorporated where practicable, consistent with Building Regulations and Local Plan Policy CC1 (Climate Change).

7. Planning Policy Context

The proposal accords with the following relevant Barnsley Local Plan (2019) policies:

- **Policy GD1 (General Development)** – the proposal is compatible with surrounding uses, of high-quality design, and protects residential amenity.
- **Policy D1 (High Quality Design and Place Making)** – respects local character, scale, and identity.
- **Policy HE1 (The Historic Environment)** – conserves and enhances the architectural significance of the existing building.
- **Policy H4 (Residential Development on Small Non-Allocated Sites)** – provides well-located new housing within a sustainable settlement.
- **Policy T3/T4 (Transport)** – promotes sustainable transport choices and road safety.
- **Policy CC1 (Climate Change)** – reuses an existing building and supports sustainable modes of transport.

The proposal meets the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) objectives for making effective use of previously developed land, delivering high-quality homes, and conserving heritage assets.

8. Conclusion

This proposal represents a sustainable reuse of a prominent local building, providing much-needed housing within the heart of Royston.

- It retains and enhances the architectural character of St Matthews Building.
- It introduces no additional bulk or overdevelopment.
- It aligns with Barnsley's Local Plan objectives for sustainable, design-led regeneration.
- It balances heritage protection with the delivery of modern living standards.

Accordingly, the proposed conversion to 15 self-contained one-bedroom apartments is considered to be fully consistent with national and local planning policies and merits approval.