

Design and Access Statement

This statement is to support the proposals to extend the Community Hall at the Barnsley Y.M.C.A on Blucher Street, Barnsley.

The site is in a town centre location just five minutes walk away from main bus and rail links, and also has its own small car park and plenty of on-street parking. The site is compact with limited access and parking around the existing building. The proposals concern the Community Hall adjacent the main YMCA building and involve extending and refurbishing this building to make it more practicable to existing users and to attract new users, especially younger people.

The Community Hall is currently used by a variety of activity groups for weekly meetings and social gatherings. The activities include pool, table tennis, karate and keep fit, whilst the many groups meeting, include youth groups, special needs youth groups, parent and toddler group, art and craft workshops, and Probus. A recently refurbished kitchen allows for refreshments and catering for functions.

After consultations with the YMCA staff and youth groups it was agreed that a redevelopment of the Community Hall would be of enormous benefit to the current users, approx 350-400 people per week and to new users, youth groups, who would be attracted by the easier access and better facilities to be offered.

Design Statement

The building itself is a good size comprising mainly a hall about 165m², with a single storey building of 60m² to the front, housing toilets and the kitchen as well as a stepped entrance. Obvious directions for development are to create an upper floor within the main hall and to add an extra floor to the single storey building at the front. Substantially extending the building beyond its present footprint is limited by the lack of space around the building and the apartment block to the rear of the property.

The YMCA staff organised meetings to encourage the youth community to become involved in the design and development of the community centre. During these discussions ideas were put forward for the use of the building and activities which could be catered for and some design ideas to incorporate. Local planners have also been consulted regarding the development impact and their response was prompt and favourable. Building control officers have also been consulted about feasibility, and disabled access and fire, regulations.

In the design brief it was deemed important to make the building accessible to anyone with disability and to allow them circulation through the building. Also better facilities were to be incorporated and the potential for a wider variety of activities to be provided. These included, new toilets, a coffee bar, I.T. suite, recording studio, offices for staff and an area to store equipment. This store would allow different groups to use the hall then remove their equipment to allow another use to take place. It could also store a demountable stage for performances. It is proposed that this store will be in the single storey extension to the side of the Community Hall.

The first floor extension will provide the staff offices and the recording studio, whilst incorporating a balcony allowing a view over the hall or into the recording studio.

Access Statement

The town centre location makes the development easily accessible by public transport, being only 5 minutes walk from the bus and railway stations. Access by car is also very easy, the Community Hall has a small un-defined car park at present and the side extension will remove 2 parking spaces leaving 5 normal and 1 disabled, spaces, but on street parking is abundant in the area.

Central to the redevelopment is access for the disabled, to allow anyone to use the building. A ramped access to an automated front door allows wheelchair access whilst wide doorways and corridors and a lift allow circulation through the building. A unisex disabled toilet will also be incorporated.