



URBANA

TOWN PLANNING

Planning Statement

Barnsley YMCA



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ALTERATIONS TO THE EXTERNAL SHOP FRONTAGES OF 1 BLUCHER STREET (ALSO REFERRED TO AS THE YMCA BUILDING)

YMCA/ Chilypep Building, 1 Blucher Street, Barnsley, S70 1AP

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Statement

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Urbana Town Planning Limited on behalf of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) to support a full planning application for external alterations to the existing shop frontages of the YMCA building. The application also includes modifications to the brick wall balustrade at the main North-Eastern entrance from Blucher Street, and the installation of a new external wall insulation system with a tiled finish.
- 1.1.2 This application follows the recent planning approval [application reference: 2023/1130] for the erection of single storey infill extension to the south-east elevation of the building, external alterations to existing entrance, installation of cladding and render, new and replacement glazing, and roof covering.
- 1.1.3 This Planning Statement provides a comprehensive appraisal of the existing site and locality alongside an assessment of the overall planning policy context, considering the Local Development Plan, National Planning Policy Framework and other key Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's), which corroborates the overall principle of development. Following this, a planning assessment of the key policy constraints is undertaken, with the Statement concluding on the overall acceptability of the development.

1.2 Pre-application discussions

- 1.2.1 Due to time constraints in submitting the planning application and the uncontroversial nature of the development, no formal pre-application enquiry was submitted to BMBC prior to submission.

1.3 The Need for the Proposed Development

- 1.3.1 The proposal forms part of one of BMBC's capital projects that comprise the delivery of its successful Levelling Up Fund 2 bid and represent a comprehensive refurbishment and small extension to the existing building, thereby enhancing the role and contribution of the YMCA and the other building user, the Barnsley Chilypep. As aforementioned the proposed alterations follow the approval of the extension to the south-east elevation in April 2024. This new application aims to gain formal permission for the design of the shop frontages, in addition to minor amendments to the building fabric and existing brick wall balustrade fronting Blucher Street.
- 1.3.2 The YMCA Barnsley is a local youth charity working for and with children, young people and their families, delivering youth work, related support services and member activities. Chilypep is the



Children and Young People’s Empowerment Project and their location in Barnsley offers children and young people in the area community, emotional wellbeing and mental health support.

- 1.3.3 The proposed development will contribute to achieving greater social sustainability in Barnsley and by enhancing the existing community facilities, the proposal will improve the amenities available to the community, supporting local needs and fostering a stronger, more resilient social fabric.

2.0 **Site & Location**

- 2.1.1 As defined in the accompanying drawing package, and the site location plan displayed in Figure 1, the application site focuses on the retail units fronting onto the Pitt and Blucher Street. The site is located at the edge of the town centre, partly bounding the A628 (the West Way), though is just a short walk from what is considered to be the centre of activity in Barnsley, being approximately 350m walking distance from May Day Green.
- 2.1.2 Beyond this context, the area surrounding the site is typical of its edge-of-centre location, hosting a range of retail and commercial uses, food outlets and surface carparking. Moving north-east, there is a higher concentration of these uses as you approach the town centre, while the south-western direction transitions to a more residential character.

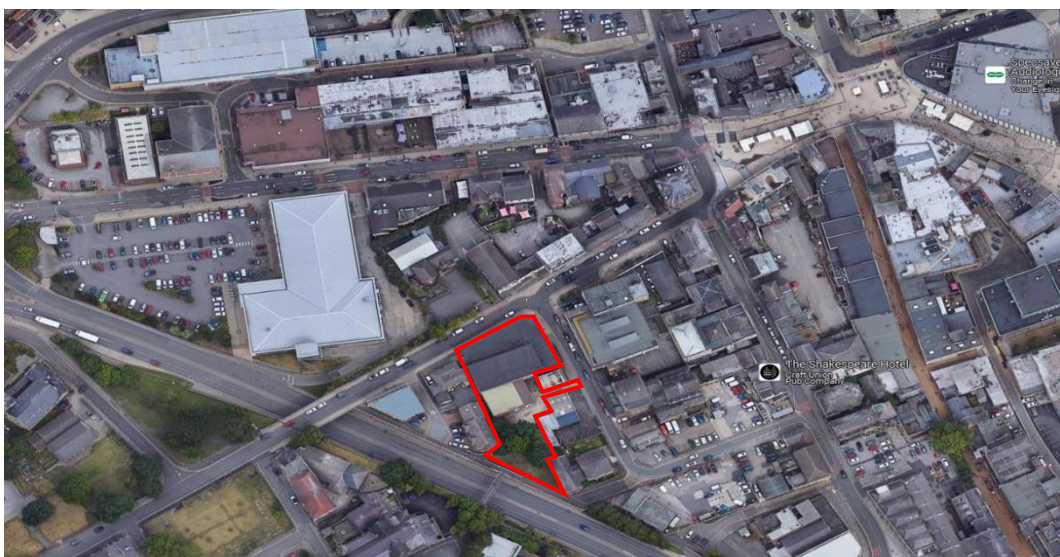


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

- 2.1.3 The property requires significant investment to enhance the external features of the property and to improve the properties appearance to meet appropriate standards. These improvements are also crucial for enhancing sustainability, environmental performance, and day-to-day operations of the tenants. Most importantly, these changes will enable the YMCA and Chilypep to enhance their services, ensuring they can better serve the community.



3.0 **Planning History**

3.1.1 The Council's online planning register lists the following planning applications for the site:

- **2018/1272** – Construction of car park and 2m high weld mesh fence – **Approved with conditions**

This application was approved for proposals to form new car parking on the adjacent green space broadly in the same manner as is now once again proposed, with the retention of some of the existing trees, access taken through the existing car park/yard and new boundary fence.

- **2018/1128** – Change of use of first floor offices to 7no residential apartments including the adaption of the internal layout, erection of single storey extension to form new YMCA entrance upon the southern elevation and alteration to access layout on the eastern elevation to provide a private entrance to the apartments – **Approved with conditions**

This application was approved for a residential conversion of the space now occupied by Chilypep. The new single storey extension entrance approved was broadly similar to that now proposed.

- **2021/0404** – Erection of single storey extension to provide new disabled accessible entrance to community hall and sports hall – **Approved with conditions**

This application was a more recent version approving the principle of a new single storey extension creating a new entrance to the sports and community halls, gaining approval distinct from its prior form as part of the undelivered residential conversion.

- **2022/0826** – Construction of car park and 2m high weld mesh fence – **Approved with conditions**

This approved application was a more recent version of the proposals to form new car parking on the adjacent green space, again broadly in the same manner as is now proposed, with the retention of some of the existing trees, access taken through the existing car park/yard and new boundary fence.

- **2023/1130** – Erection of single storey infill extension to south-east elevation of the building, external alterations to existing entrance, installation of cladding and render, new and replacement glazing, and roof covering. Internal refurbishment, creation of access and proposed new car park – **Approved with conditions**

3.1.2 The new submission deals with the external alterations to the shop frontages facing Pitt Street including the provision of new front signage, thermal upgrades to the whole building fabric, remediation of existing fabric deterioration, external wall insulation and the installation of new glazing and doors.



4.0 **Proposed Development**

- 4.1.1 This planning application primarily seeks approval to upgrade the existing retail unit frontage on Pitt Street and Blucher Street. Therefore, the main planning considerations focus on the material alterations to the external building fabric.
- 4.1.2 The existing retail unit frontage and signage on Pitt Street and Blucher Street is considered detrimental to the external physical environment and lacks distinctive characteristics that positively contribute to the public realm. The proposed changes seek to enhance the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the shop frontages, aligning them more closely with the overall character and quality of the area.
- 4.1.3 Furthermore, the proposal seeks to make thermal upgrades to the building fabric by installing new glazing within the existing shopfront. The current shopfront features single glazing, which is ineffective for thermal insulation. The proposed new glazing will significantly improve the unit's energy efficiency, in line with the enhancements approved in the previous application for the rest of the building.
- 4.1.4 Following a programme of 'retrofit ready' works to repair and remediate existing fabric deterioration, an external wall insulation system, new glazing and doors are to be installed. This will, as far as possible within the constraints of the project scope and budget, help the building to be resilient to a changing climate, and safeguard its use as a community hub for youth activities and services, as well as its wider community uses with some of the more vulnerable people groups in the local area.
- 4.1.5 The proposals draw upon historic planning drawings made available to the Design Team by BMBC Archives & Local Studies. These drawings have been utilised as reference to establish principles for sensitive repair, upgrade, and improvement within the context of the existing building.



Figure 2: Proposed North-West Elevations

- 4.1.6 The external materials schedule for the proposed shopfront is outlined in the accompanying detailed elevation drawings. The proposed finishes, including a Granite Grey Spandrel Panel and



Charcoal tiled finish, are contemporary features which have been selected to enhance the aesthetic appeal and integrate with the surrounding area.

4.1.7 The application also proposes external modifications to the existing brick wall balustrade at the main North-Eastern entrance accessible from Blucher Street. The balustrade will be carefully reduced to 150mm above ramp/stair level to accommodate new tiling, coping, and a vertical rail balustrade with an attached metal handrail. The new handrail will be mounted onto the existing brick wall, which will require new coping stones to be installed after the demolition works. These changes aim to enhance both functionality and aesthetic appeal.

4.1.8 Additionally, the detailed plans include the installation of a Windcatcher Louvre on the roof of the property to enhance natural ventilation in the sports hall.

4.1.9 In summary, the key elements of this application to consider are:

- The new configuration of the shop fronts, especially the relocation of the entrance doors to enable level access as far as possible from the street.
- The designated shop signage area.
- The proposed external wall insulation system with tiled finish.
- External modifications to the existing brick wall balustrade at the main North-Eastern entrance accessible from Blucher Street, including erection of new balustrade and handrail.



5.0 **Planning Policy Context and Principle of Development**

5.1 **Brief Planning Policy Overview**

5.1.1 Whilst not necessary to provide a non-exhaustive list of planning policy, when determining the application, the most relevant planning policy documents include the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF](revised December 2023)
- Barnsley Local Plan (adopted January 2019)
- Relevant associated Supplementary Planning Documents (e.g Shopfront Design adopted May 2019)

5.2 **Sustainability and Principle of Development**

5.2.1 At the core of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which the NPPF states should always be a fundamental consideration in the process of both plan-making and decision-taking. Sustainable development is defined by 3 core dimensions: economic, social and environmental.

5.2.2 This is reflected locally in Local Plan policy SD1, which is also concerned with the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development.

5.2.3 Whilst not necessary at this stage to go into a great length of detail on each pillar of sustainability, the proposed development presents the following benefits:

- **Economic** – The proposed financial investment will yield significant economic benefits, supporting local jobs during construction and benefiting small businesses in South Yorkshire. Enhancements to the building's thermal and environmental performance will improve the financial resilience and sustainability of the resident charities, allowing them to allocate more funds to their valuable work instead of utility payments. Additionally, due to the site's central location in Barnsley, the investment will have a positive impact on local businesses, services, and amenities, both during and after construction.
- **Social** – In the case of this planning application, the proposals represent redevelopment that will, principally, make a significant contribution towards achieving greater social sustainability in the town centre of Barnsley. This will be contributed primarily through the enhancement of the existing charitable infrastructure/community facilities represented by the proposals, which will manifest itself as previously alluded to in improvements to the quality of the existing provision, as well as the (perhaps relatively limited, but still tangible) impact of potentially increased activity in the area surrounding the site resulting from the proposals.



- **Environmental** – Environmentally, the sustainable location of the site in terms of its accessibility affords the proposals with significant sustainability credentials. Furthermore, the fact that the proposals represent a reuse, refurbishment and substantial improvements to an existing building at a higher level of efficiency must be given significant positive weight. On a technical level, as a central element of the proposals and this project within the associated LUF funding, there is commitment to delivering the highest standard of enhancement that funding will support. The proposals are intended to perform at a high level with respect to energy efficiency, quality of construction and selection of materials.

5.2.4 Based on the above, the proposed development accords with the principles of 'sustainable development' as per the respective provisions of the NPPF.



6.0 Planning Assessment and Principle of Development

6.1.1 This section provides an overview of the key planning policies and design considerations relevant to the proposal.

Local Planning Policy

6.1.2 Policy 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.

6.1.3 The site is located within the Urban Fabric on the outer edge of Barnsley Town Centre's central district. The surrounding area features a mix of uses, including public houses, retail stores, betting shops, and residential properties. Currently, the site serves multiple purposes, such as retail outlets and a sports hall/youth centre and this proposal aims to enhance the building's existing functions without altering its use, thereby securing the property's established role in the community for the future.

6.1.4 Policy 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. These elements are integral to ensuring that developments contribute positively to the local environment and community.

6.1.5 Key features of high-quality design and place making include but are not limited to:

- Transforming run-down, indistinct physical environments.
- Providing accessible and inclusive spaces for building users and the surrounding area.
- Complementing and enhancing the character and setting of distinctive places, such as Barnsley Town Centre.
- Making the best use of high-quality materials.

6.1.6 The adopted Shopfront Design SPD highlights that good design conveys quality and permanence, making shopping environments more attractive and boosting business performance. Conversely, poorly designed or maintained shopfronts can negatively impact the area's environment, local economy, and the wellbeing of residents and visitors. The existing shopfronts on Pitt Street and Blucher Street require upgrading and financial investment to reach an attractive standard. The proposed enhancements to the property's external fabric, including new glazing and external tiling will undoubtedly improve the surrounding public realm, making it more visually appealing and contributing positively to the area's overall aesthetic and economic vitality.



- 6.1.7 Policy SD1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development – When considering development proposals, the LPA should take a positive approach to decision making that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. The LPA will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- 6.1.8 Regarding the development proposed, it is evident that the scheme represents sustainable development and provides various associated social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 6.1.9 Policy HE3 - Developments affecting Historic Buildings - The property in question is s located to the south of the grade II-listed 'Temperence Hall' and in accordance with Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special regard is required to be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 6.1.10 As discussed, the property requires significant investment to enhance the external aesthetics and the North-West elevation is particularly unsympathetic to the listed structure and wider street scene. It is considered that the proposed external alterations are more sympathetic to the setting of the listed build and would enhance the setting of the wider street scene. Therefore, the proposal aligns with Policy HE3, as it conserves or enhances the character and setting of the pertinent listed structure.
- 6.1.11 The proposal includes establishing a designated signage area for the commercial units fronting onto Pitt Street and Blucher Street. A separate application for advertisement consent will be submitted in due course, with specific details in relation to design to be considered under this application.

National Planning Policy

- 6.1.12 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 policies include:
- Section 12: Achieving well-designed and beautiful places.
 - Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 6.1.13 The proposed development is anticipated to significantly enhance the public realm compared to the existing ground floor elevations of the property. This improvement will create a more attractive and functional environment, benefiting both the community and the wider street scene. The



enhancements will positively transform the area, making it more appealing and conducive to community interaction. Thus, in accordance with the principles of the NPPF the LPA should view the application in a positive light.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1.1 Overall, the type and scale of the proposed development present limited planning policy constraints, with the primary considerations focusing on design changes to the North-West and North-East elevations. This Statement, along with the accompanying plans and documentation, demonstrates that the development will be respectful of the surrounding context from an urban design perspective. Key design elements have been carefully considered to ensure compatibility with the existing urban fabric, underscoring the development's commitment to enhancing the surrounding area.
- 7.1.2 The application consists of a particularly uncontroversial development scheme which offers significant economic, social, and environmental benefits, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and is consistent with the strategic objectives of the adopted Local Development Plan and the NPPF.
- 7.1.3 It is our view that the provisions of the relevant adopted Local Development Plan Documents and NPPF have been fully adhered to and consequently there is no reasonable policy justification to support the refusal of this application. We therefore request that the application be approved without delay.

