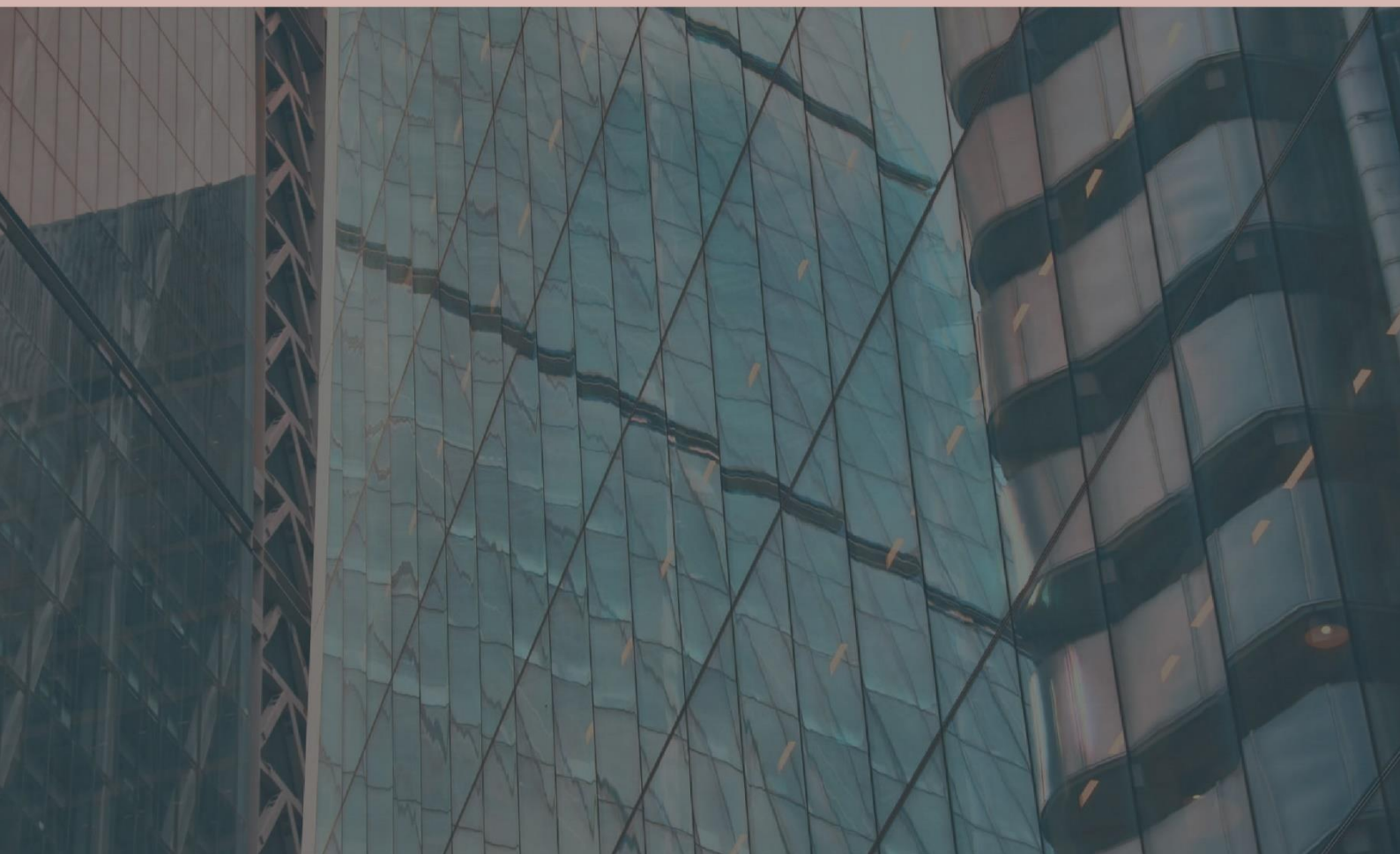




URBANA
TOWN PLANNING

Extension and Refurbishment Works to Barnsley YMCA

Planning Statement



Prepared by: CD
Client: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Date: December 2023
Submitted to: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council



EXTENSION AND REFURBISHMENT WORKS TO BARNSELY YMCA, BLUCHER ST, BARNSELY, S70 1AP

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Urbana Town Planning, on behalf of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council in support of an application seeking planning permission for the proposals described above.
- 1.2 The development proposals have been subject to engagement with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council planning departments ('the LPA') in the form of informal correspondence prior to this application, which has guided the proposals and the informed the supporting information submitted.
- 1.3 The proposals form one of the Council'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.
- 1.4 The YMCA is a well known global youth charity. 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.
- 1.5 This statement demonstrates justification for the proposals from a planning perspective through their accordance with relevant local and national planning policy, with consideration given to the pertinent aspects of sustainable development in the context of the site and its surroundings.



2.0 Site and Location Overview

- 2.1 As defined in the accompanying drawing package, and as shown in the image below, the application site is focused on the YMCA building at 1 Blucher Street, though it also encompasses other addresses within its demise including retail units that front onto the adjacent Pitt Street. It 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. 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, transitioning in the north-easterly direction to a higher concentration of these uses in the town centre proper, and to a more residential character to the south-west.



- 2.2 In its existing state, due to its age the building is in a less than adequate state, and so is in growing need of refurbishment and of some repair in order to -in part- bring it up to a more appropriate basic standard, but also primarily in order to improve its sustainability, its environmental performance, its day-to-day operational function, and crucially to allow for improvement and enhancement to the services that the YMCA and Chilypep offer.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 Accordingly, the application seeks planning permission for a number of changes that are described below.

3.2 Not all of these elements would require planning permission individually, but some do, and so the whole of the proposed programme of works is set out:

- Principal external works:
 - Erection of single storey infill extension to south-east elevation of the building to form new and improved entrance and level access to both community hall and sports hall (largely as per previous approval).
 - Alterations to existing main entrance on north-east elevation fronting Blucher Street.
 - Installation of new external insulated cladding and render systems.
 - Creation of access through existing yard/car park to new proposed car park.
 - Creation of new car park on adjacent existing green space (largely as per previous approval).
 - New high level clerestory glazing to sports hall.
 - Partial new community hall insulated roof covering.
 - Replacement of existing windows with high environmental performance units.
- Principal internal works:
 - Sports hall: floor refurbishment, acoustic attenuation, line re-marking, new glazing.
 - First floor (Chilypep): new kitchen and works to lounge area.
 - Other minor internal layout adjustments.



4.0 Relevant Planning History + Pre-Application

- 4.1 A number of relatively recent planning applications have been made relating to the application site which are of particular relevance to the proposals. These include:

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.

- 4.2 Further to this, more recent informal correspondence has been exchanged with the officer who dealt with the most recent application on the site – Nathan Denman. While it is understood that Nathan has now left the LPA, he provided confirmation of the likely acceptability of the principles of what is proposed, and also advised on the validation requirements.
- 4.3 These were determined as being the usual statutory requirements for plans and elevations, design and access statement, plus a supporting ecology/biodiversity note (but not formal ecological survey).



5.0 Planning Assessment

5.1 In determining the application, the most relevant planning policy documents include the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)(revised September 2023).
- Barnsley Local Plan (2019).
- Relevant associated Supplementary Planning Documents (e.g. Sustainable Construction and Climate Change Adaptation July 2023).

Sustainable Development

5.2 The NPPF states that at the heart of the document is a presumption in favour of sustainable development that represents 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. It is established that: *“For decision taking this means: approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.”* (Paragraph 11c).

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

5.4 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 Barnsley, in addition to meaningful economic and environmental sustainability contributions. 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.

5.5 There is also less tangible but equally valuable economic benefit arising from the financial investment represented by the proposals which will support local jobs during the course of construction, and which is indeed already supporting small businesses in the wider South Yorkshire area. Further in this respect the significant improvements to the thermal and wider environmental performance of the building will also benefit the financial resilience and sustainability of both resident charities, helping to support their existing employment and also allowing for more of their funds to go towards the valuable work that they do rather than to



substantial utilities payments. It is further considered that the significance of achieving all this will be amplified by the fact of the site's central location within Barnsley, which as a result of which the investment represented by the proposals will feed back more effectively into the businesses, services and amenities in the immediate surroundings, both during and after construction.

- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 In addition to this, in spite of ongoing economic challenges, it remains the case that construction is at the forefront of economic recovery from the long-term market shock from the COVID-19 pandemic and development schemes in the town, including these proposals, will lead the way in this process. Furthermore, in periods of social uncertainty, confidence shown through the enhancement of existing charitable and community facilities such as that proposed by this scheme will be invaluable in supporting the social and civic life of Barnsley.
- 5.8 As a result, it is asserted that the proposals represent a scheme that fulfils underlying sustainable development goals and requirements in terms of its economic, social and environmental sustainability. Moreover, it is evident that the proposals represent sustainable development and, in accordance with the compliance with other policies as indicated below, should be approved without delay.

Principle of Proposed Use

- 5.9 With respect to the principle of the proposed development for improved and slightly expanded charitable/community facilities the planning policy matter of most immediate relevance is the land use designation. In this case, the site is situated within the Southgate area of Barnsley's town centre zone, and the primary shopping area. A wide range of uses are allowed in these areas with a focus of retail, supporting employment-generating uses and other supporting mixed uses including residential at an appropriate nature and density. In this case of course the proposals do not seek to change the existing uses on the site and as such the proposed improvements/slight intensification of the existing uses is considered acceptable in policy terms.



- 5.10 In terms of more general local planning policy relating to the existing uses, the Local Plan makes clear in Policy I2, *Educational and Community Facilities*, that the Council supports the provision of schools, educational facilities and other community facilities. It highlights that it is an ambition of the Council to invest in such facilities, an ambition which these proposals directly fulfil. The role that these facilities and institutions play in the economic, cultural and social life of Barnsley is acknowledged, and that such development will be supported.

Highways + Access

- 5.11 In this respect it should be understood that, fundamentally, the nature of the site, its location and its primary users is such that the majority of visits and trips to the building are and will remain primarily by sustainable/active modes of travel. Notwithstanding this, the proposals do of course include the formation of an additional car park area and an increase in the number of car parking spaces.
- 5.12 Nevertheless, the overall numbers involved remain small and as set out previously have indeed already been granted planning permission on multiple occasions. As such it is the case that the development will not have a significant -or any sort of- impact on the surrounding highway network.
- 5.13 The access itself remains suitable for the relatively small number of vehicle movements that will derive from the proposals and once again the previous granting of permission for the slight intensification of use of the access is considered to represent a suitable level of reassurance that it is the consideration of the local Highway and Planning authorities that the access is appropriate.

Trees and Ecology

- 5.14 The consideration of impact on trees and ecology or biodiversity is necessary from a planning perspective owing to the proposed car parking area which will have implications in these respects, prompting the removal of a small number of trees on the site. As previously introduced, due to this the need for a short, proportionate ecology note (but not detailed arboricultural information) was agreed with officers.
- 5.15 Also as part of informal discussion prior to the submission of this application, correspondence has been exchanged with BMBC officer Jo Birch, Parks Supervisor. This has established the acceptability of the necessary tree removals through commitment to replacement planting at a 2:1 ratio.



- 5.16 Furthermore, the individual responsible for the adjacent Grade II Listed Love Life Church building, David Sutcliffe, has submitted correspondence to the applicant registering their support of the removal of the existing tree adjacent to their property, which they consider to represent a hazard to the integrity of the heritage asset.
- 5.17 This matter is reflected broadly in Local Plan policy BI01 *Biodiversity and Geodiversity*, which sets out the Council's approach towards development that might impact upon important biodiversity and/or geological features of the Borough. This policy is principally concerned with the conservation and enhancement of important features and designated sites but does also refer to the more general need to protect Ancient and Veteran trees and to encourage the provision of biodiversity enhancements.
- 5.18 The policy does not set out restrictions that are considered to be relevant to the proposals such that they would represent reason for objection from a policy perspective. However, as per the aforementioned planning officer correspondence, the application is accompanied by an ecology note which offers reassurance in this regard and sets out that protected biodiversity/habitat features will not be unduly harmed by the proposals, and that given the existing nature of the site, the proposals in fact represent an opportunity to secure biodiversity enhancements (the details of which may be agreed by condition if necessary).

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The application seeks planning permission for the extension and refurbishment works set out, in order to modernise the environmental performance, the functionality and the appearance of the existing YMCA/Chilypep building on the site, and to dramatically enhance its sustainable in multiple dimensions.
- 6.2 The proposals will offer key social, environmental and economic benefits to the charities that are resident in the building and as such also to the members of the public that they serve. Through this statement it has been shown that the proposals are acceptable in planning policy terms, in large part due to the extent of benefit that they represent, but also due to the fact that perhaps the most impactful elements (the extension and car park) have been approved in the past.
- 6.3 As a result of this, it is considered that it has been proven that the proposals comply with all relevant national and local policy and are therefore acceptable. It is therefore hoped that the LPA agrees and seeks to grant planning permission without delay.

