

Design & Access Statement

NatWest branch design

Our Points of Presence branches promote self-service and assisted financial services using automation and staff operated open counters.

Site address	NatWest Barnsley 26 Market Hill Barnsley S70 2QE
Applicant details	NatWest Group Spinningfields Square 1, Quay St Manchester M3 3AP
Agent details	jmarchitects 3A 54 Princess Street Manchester M1 6HS
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Description of development

Provision of an internal platform lift on the left side of the front elevation to facilitate wheelchair and ambulant disabled access. In response to the refusal notice comments received from the Council, the previously proposed pavement regrading is refused due to the varied gradient ratios within the adopted highway were considered inappropriate and would not provide safe, secure, and convenient access for all users within and surrounding the development. Therefore, internal access solutions have been explored to avoid any adverse impact on the existing public pathway.

A new separate entrance lobby incorporating a platform lift will be provided by modifying the existing window cill and ATM room, including rearranging the ATM machine layout and modifying the bank hall layout to suit. A new floor platform will be constructed, rising 634 mm to meet the street level and provide a level threshold for entry.

Philosophy and approach

We are committed to deliver an appropriate, improved and accessible personal service and banking experience for our customers and staff through our Points of Presence initiative. We value our connection with the locality, and its community, and have improved financial transaction support to local businesses.

Branch context and location

The branch occupies a prominent plot on Market Hill in the Market Hill Conservation area. There is generous width to the pavement, but it slopes steeply with a downward gradient across the building front from left to right (north to south). The entrance is situated to the righthand side (southern end) of the building elevation

The window opening at the far left of the front elevation will be altered to create a new entrance opening with a level threshold, allowing for a fully compliant accessible entrance to the branch.

Navigating our branches

We promote clear wayfinding throughout the branch by deploying a change of floor finish to help with navigation and delineate the pace of transactions. We use hard flooring in ‘fast traffic’ areas, such as self-service automation, and carpeted areas for longer dwell time. Interior paint treatments are considered, and applied, to aid and assist visually impaired customers, and staff to help navigate the branch.

To maintain aesthetic consistency, the existing window jamb will be retained and extended down to street level to create the new entrance opening, reusing existing surface materials wherever possible and incorporating matching materials where necessary to minimise the impact on the building’s front elevation.

Access to services

Our branches deliver fully accessible services through automation and serviced open counters. They include approved DDA & ergonomic features.

It is NatWest Group policy to provide access for customers and staff to all services, and should there be any special request or requirement, a member of staff will be on hand to support and to make sure that the customer is assisted as necessary, and reasonable adjustment can be made to accommodate specific staff needs.

Leaving the building

Exiting the branch is through the entrance described above. A supplementary fire exit is located at the rear of the building providing a safe escape route from the back of house.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

The purpose of this statement is to assess the NatWest Bank at 26 Market Hill, Barnsley and the effect of proposals on existing architectural character.

Building overview

Whilst the branch itself is not listed, it is flanked by another historic listed building, originally constructed in 1903 for the Yorkshire Penny Bank. It is also located in the Market Hill Conservation area.

Regent Street, Church Street and Market Hill Conservation Area was designated in 1973 to encompass Regent Street and Church Street. It was extended in 1977 to include Market Hill,

Eldon Street and the Arcade areas. The current boundary includes the bulk of the historic and listed buildings in the town centre.

Application proposal

Regulation compliance

Although originally designed as a bank, the two steps at the main entrance render the building inaccessible and unfit for purpose for wheelchair users and persons with ambulant disabilities. The aim of the proposed alterations is to upgrade the building with a compliant entrance taking advantage of the existing slope so the impact on the general image of the building is minimal.

Recent planning history

2025/0448

Regrade of pavement levels to provide level threshold and create accessible entrance to the bank's existing entrance. Status: Refuse 15/5/2025

2025/0287

Replacement surround at ATM. Status: Approve with conditions 31/3/2025

2022/0818

Replacement of existing external signage with new branded signage, including new internally illuminated fascia with logo, new internally illuminated projecting signage and ATM surrounds (x2), new welcome sign (nameplate), new header sign and vinyl graphics to glazing. Status: Approved with conditions 21/10/2022.

2015/0974

Installation of new external ramp and steps to external front elevation of existing NatWest Bank. (Refused 8/10/2015)

2014/1214

Display of 1 no. internally illuminated fascia sign, 1 no. internally illuminated and 1 no. non-illuminated entrance signs, and 2 no. illuminated name plates/ATM surrounds to Bank. Status: Approved with Conditions 9/12/2014)

B/03/2181/BA

Formation of access for use by the disabled. Status: Refused in 2014.

Effect of the proposed scheme on heritage significance

Externally the upgrade to a compliant entrance will ensure the branch remains easily identifiable and accessible to everyone regardless of their physical ability, promoting a positive banking culture in Barnsley. The pavement alterations will ensure the building can remain in use with its original purpose, complying with anti-discriminatory regulations.

Photographic record





