

Application Reference Number:	2026/0327.		
Application Type:	Full (Regulation 3).		
Proposal Description:	Installation of black metal archway.		
Location:	Armed Services Walkway, Westgate, Barnsley.		
Applicant:	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.		
Third-party representations:	None.	Parish:	
		Ward:	Central.

This application is being brought before members because the applicant is the Council.

Summary:

The applicant is seeking planning permission for the installation of a black metal archway that would extend above the access steps leading from the Armed Services Walkway off Westgate and through the Barnsley College and John Riddeal House green space.

The principle of development is considered acceptable pursuant to paragraph 104 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies GS1, GS2 and I2. The principle of development is attributed significant weight in favour of the proposal.

This proposal is considered acceptable regarding its impacts on visual amenity, highways and public rights of way, residential amenity, health and pollution control, and biodiversity and geodiversity and trees, pursuant to paragraphs 105 and 116 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies D1, GS2, T4, GD1, POLL1, and BIO1, and is attributed significant and moderate weight in favour respectively.

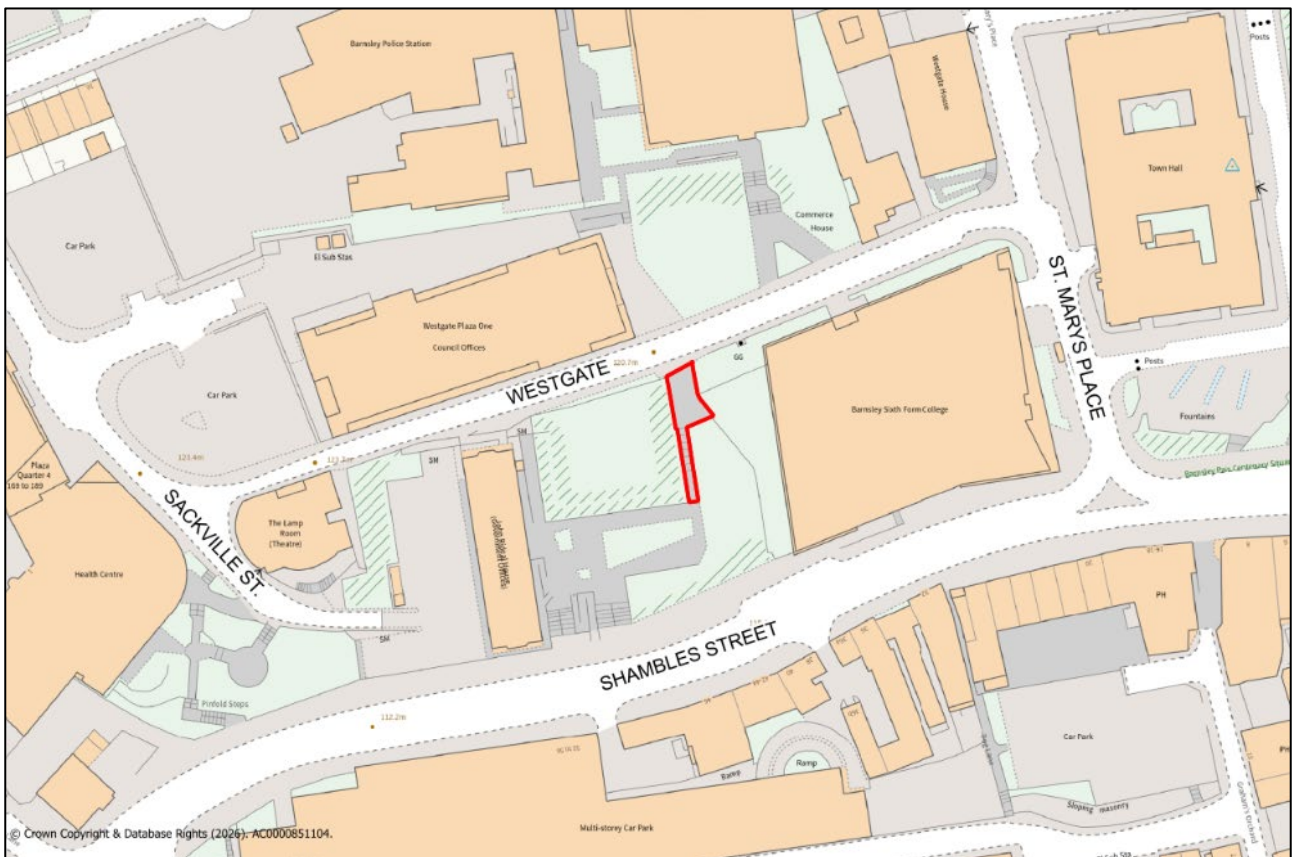
The proposed black metal archway would act as a new visual marker to the existing Armed Services Walkway and would help to expand on existing works to create a strong, distinct sense of place with heightened visibility, welcoming ambiance, and increased local value. The proposed archway would therefore be a welcome addition that would provide a unique contribution to local distinctiveness and character, whilst also supporting and enhancing existing green spaces and public rights of way.

This proposal is therefore considered to be an acceptable and sustainable form of development in accordance with Section 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024).

Recommendation: **APPROVE subject to conditions.**

Site Description

This application relates to the Armed Services Walkway which is located to the south of the Council offices at Westgate Plaza One, to the west of Barnsley Sixth Form College, the east of John Riddeal House, and within the Barnsley College and John Riddeal House green space. The walkway provides part of a stepped public right of way which connects Westgate to the north with Shambles Street to the south. This area acts as public realm characterised by memorial paving, visual markers, benches and soft landscaping.



Relevant Policies

The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires development proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Barnsley consists of the Barnsley Local Plan (adopted January 2019).

The Local Plan review was approved at a full Council meeting held 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering on its objectives. This means, no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review, which is due to take place in 2027, or earlier, if circumstances require it.

The development site is located in Barnsley Town Centre in the Westgate and Churchfields District, and forms part of the Barnsley College and John Riddeal House greenspace whilst providing a public right of way between Westgate to the north and Shambles Street to the south.

The following Local Plan policies are therefore relevant in this case:

- *Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development.*
- *Policy GS1: Green Space.*
- *Policy GS2: Green Ways and Public Rights of Way.*
- *Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making.*
- *Policy GD1: General Development.*
- *Policy POLL1: Pollution Control and Protection.*
- *Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety.*
- *Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.*

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance

In December 2024, the Government published a revised NPPF which is the most recent revision of the original Framework, first published in 2012 and updated several times, providing the overarching planning framework for England. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The revised document has replaced the earlier planning policy statements, planning policy guidance and various policy letters and circulars, which are now cancelled.

Central to the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10) and plans and decisions should apply this presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental; each of these aspects are mutually dependent. The following NPPF sections are relevant in this case:

- *Section 2: Achieving sustainable development.*
- *Section 4: Decision-making.*
- *Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities.*
- *Section 12: Achieving well designed places.*
- *Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.*

The National Design Guidance (2019) is a material consideration and sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places based on planning policy expectations. A written ministerial statement states that local planning authorities should take this guidance into account when taking decisions.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

In line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Barnsley has adopted twenty-eight Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) following the adoption of the Local Plan in January 2019. The following SPDs are relevant in this case:

- *Biodiversity and Geodiversity (Adopted March 2024).*
- *Parking (Adopted November 2019).*
- *Trees and Hedgerows (Adopted May 2019).*

The adopted SPDs should be treated as material considerations in decision making and are afforded full weight.

Representations

This planning application has been advertised in accordance with Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

This application has been advertised on the Council website.

A site notice was placed nearby which expired 08th June 2026.

A press notice was used which expired 15th June 2026.

No representations were received.

Consultations

Local Ward Councillors	<i>No comment(s) received.</i>
Highways Development Control	<i>No objection(s).</i>
Public Rights of Way	<i>No comment(s) received.</i>
Forestry Officer	<i>Verbal comment(s) received.</i>

Planning Assessment

For the purposes of considering the balance in this application, the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale unless the NPPF establishes a specific weight:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest
- Limited
- Little or no

Principle of Development and Impact on Green Space

Paragraph 104 of the NPPF establishes that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Local Plan Policy GS1: Green Space establishes that proposals that result in the loss of green space, or land that was last used as green space, will not normally be allowed unless:

An assessment shows that there is too much of that green space in the area which it serves, and its loss would not affect the existing and potential green space needs of the borough; or

The proposal relates to small scale facilities needed to support or improve the proper function of the green space; or

An appropriate replacement green space of equivalent or improved quality, quantity and accessibility is provided which would outweigh the loss.

In this instance, this proposal is for the installation of a black metal archway intended to complement the existing Armed Services Walkway. The proposal would not result in the loss of any existing green space and is instead viewed as an enhancement to support or improve its proper function according with Local Plan Policy GS1. The level of development proposed is also proportionate to the size of the green space and would support its primary use. As such, no financial contribution will be required in this instance, according with Local Plan Policies GS1, GS2 and I2.

Considering the above, the principle of development is considered acceptable subject to assessment of the following matters and is attributed significant weight in favour of the proposal.

Impact on Visual Amenity

The existing street scene of Westgate adopts a mixed material palette that comprises light, dark and neutral tones, and street furniture that tends to be constructed of metallic materials in light and dark finishes with a slim profile.

The proposed black metal archway would be installed at the top of the stairs leading from the Armed Services Walkway off Westgate towards Shambles Street.

The proposed black metal archway would be located within the Barnsley College and John Riddeal House green space and would not appear as an overly dominant or prominent structure in the street scenes of Westgate or Shambles Street. The proposed archway would adopt sympathetic materials and finishes with a slim profile and restrained height above the top of the steps. Existing landscaping would help to soften the archway's appearance when viewed from the surrounding public realm and would offer an inviting backdrop emphasising the contrast between urban and natural environments and elements in a considerate and enjoyable manner. Views to the south from Westgate would also be framed by the proposed archway and could act to enhance user experience.

The proposed black metal archway would act as a new visual marker to the existing Armed Services Walkway and would help to expand on existing works to create a strong, distinct sense of place with heightened visibility, welcoming ambiance, and increased local value. The proposed archway would therefore be a welcome addition that would provide a unique contribution to local distinctiveness and character, whilst also supporting and enhancing existing green spaces and public rights of way. This proposal is therefore considered acceptable regarding its impact on visual amenity, and any potential harm is considered to be outweighed by the anticipated benefits in this instance.

Considering the above, on balance, this is considered to weigh significantly in favour of the proposal.

This proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy D1: High Quality Design and Placemaking and is considered acceptable regarding impacts on visual amenity.

Impact on Highways and Public Rights of Way

Paragraph 105 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and accesses, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF sets out development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe following mitigation and considering all other reasonable future scenarios.

Local Plan Policy GS2: Green Ways and Public Rights of Way establishes that the Council will seek to protect Green Ways and Public Rights of Way from developments which may affect their character or function. In some instances, a new route or contributions to a new route, links to an existing route, or improvements to an existing route may be required.

The proposed black metal archway would be installed at the top of the stairs leading from the Armed Services Walkway off Westgate towards Shambles Street and would be supported by two cylindrical poles at either side of the steps. The existing walkway provides part of a stepped public right of way which connects Westgate with Shambles Street.

This proposal would not adversely affect the character or function of this public footpath which runs through the Barnsley College and John Riddeal House green space and will be maintained as exists. In this instance, this proposal is considered acceptable with respect of paragraph 105 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policy GS2. There would be no requirement for a new route or financial contributions to a new route, or links or improvements to an existing route.

Highways Development Control colleagues were consulted; and it was established that the proposal would not be located on adopted highway but would be on a registered public right of way. Following internal consultations with the Structures Team, it was confirmed that the proposal would be classified as a highway structure and therefore, would not require technical approval. However, further details were requested in respect of the proposed fixing and foundation details.

Following discussion with the commissioned supplier and fitter the Applicant confirmed the structure would be secured to the concrete plinth at the top of the stairs. Metal brackets would then be installed passing through the timber cladding and fixing into the concrete behind. If further structural support is required, a concrete base plate could be installed to anchor the archway into the ground.

The Applicant has confirmed that several sections of cladding have already been removed to confirm this is feasible and that provision has been made within the budget should further structural support be necessary.

Considering this, Highways Development Control and Structures colleagues raised no objections to this proposal. This proposal is therefore not considered to be prejudicial to highway safety.

Considering the above, this is considered to weigh significantly in favour of the proposal.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with paragraphs 105 and 116 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies GS2: Green Ways and Public Rights of Way and T4: New Development and Transport Safety and is considered acceptable regarding impacts on highway safety and public rights of way.

Impact on Residential Amenity, Health and Pollution Control

There are no nearby residential dwellings, and it is not considered that the proposed internal and external alterations would contribute to significant increased levels of overshadowing, overlooking and loss of privacy, or reduced outlook.

It is acknowledged that there could be some disruption and nuisance caused to people in the locality during construction works. However, any potential impacts are anticipated to be temporary and could be controlled by conditions.

Considering the above, this is considered to weigh moderately in favour of the proposal.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy GD1: General Development and Local Plan Policy POLL1: Pollution Control and Protection and is considered acceptable regarding impacts on residential amenity, health and pollution control.

Impact on Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Tress

In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory from 12 February 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and means developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This proposal falls under one of the listed exemptions and is therefore not subject to BNG in this instance.

There is an area of trees and vegetation located to the east of the proposed location of the proposed black metal archway.

Verbal discussions held with the Council's Forestry Officer determined that there would unlikely be significant impacts on this area of trees and vegetation. The proposed archway would either be fixed to existing structures or require minimal and shallow foundations which could be excavated by hand to limit the extent of any potential impacts, if required. The trees are also owned by the Council, and as such, any works required would be an internal matter to be agreed between relevant parties.

Considering the above, this is considered to weigh moderately in favour of the proposal.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and is considered acceptable regarding impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity and trees.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

In accordance with the provision of paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2024), this proposal is considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The applicant is seeking planning permission for the installation of a black metal archway that would extend above the access steps leading from the Armed Services Walkway off Westgate and through the Barnsley College and John Riddeal House green space.

The principle of development is considered acceptable pursuant to paragraph 104 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies GS1, GS2 and I2. The principle of development is attributed significant weight in favour of the proposal.

This proposal is considered acceptable regarding its impacts on visual amenity, highways and public rights of way, residential amenity, health and pollution control, and biodiversity and geodiversity and trees, pursuant to paragraphs 105 and 116 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies D1, GS2, T4, GD1, POLL1, and BIO1, and is attributed significant and moderate weight in favour respectively.

The proposed black metal archway would act as a new visual marker to the existing Armed Services Walkway and would help to expand on existing works to create a strong, distinct sense of place with heightened visibility, welcoming ambiance, and increased local value. The proposed archway would therefore be a welcome addition that would provide a unique contribution to local distinctiveness and character, whilst also supporting and enhancing existing green spaces and public rights of way.

For the reasons given above, and taking all other matters into consideration, this proposal complies with the relevant local and national planning policies and guidance.

Planning permission should therefore be granted subject to necessary conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions.

Justification

Statement of compliance with Article 35 of the Town and Country Development Management Procedure Order 2015.

In dealing with the application, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has worked with the applicant to find solutions to the following issues that arose whilst dealing with the planning application:

- *To provide further details in respect of how the proposed archway would be made secure.*

Due regard has been given to Article 8 and Protocol 1 of Article 1 of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998 when considering representations, the determination of the application and the resulting recommendation. It is considered that the recommendation will not interfere with the applicant's and/or any objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.