

2025/0064

Claire Gilmore (BMBC)

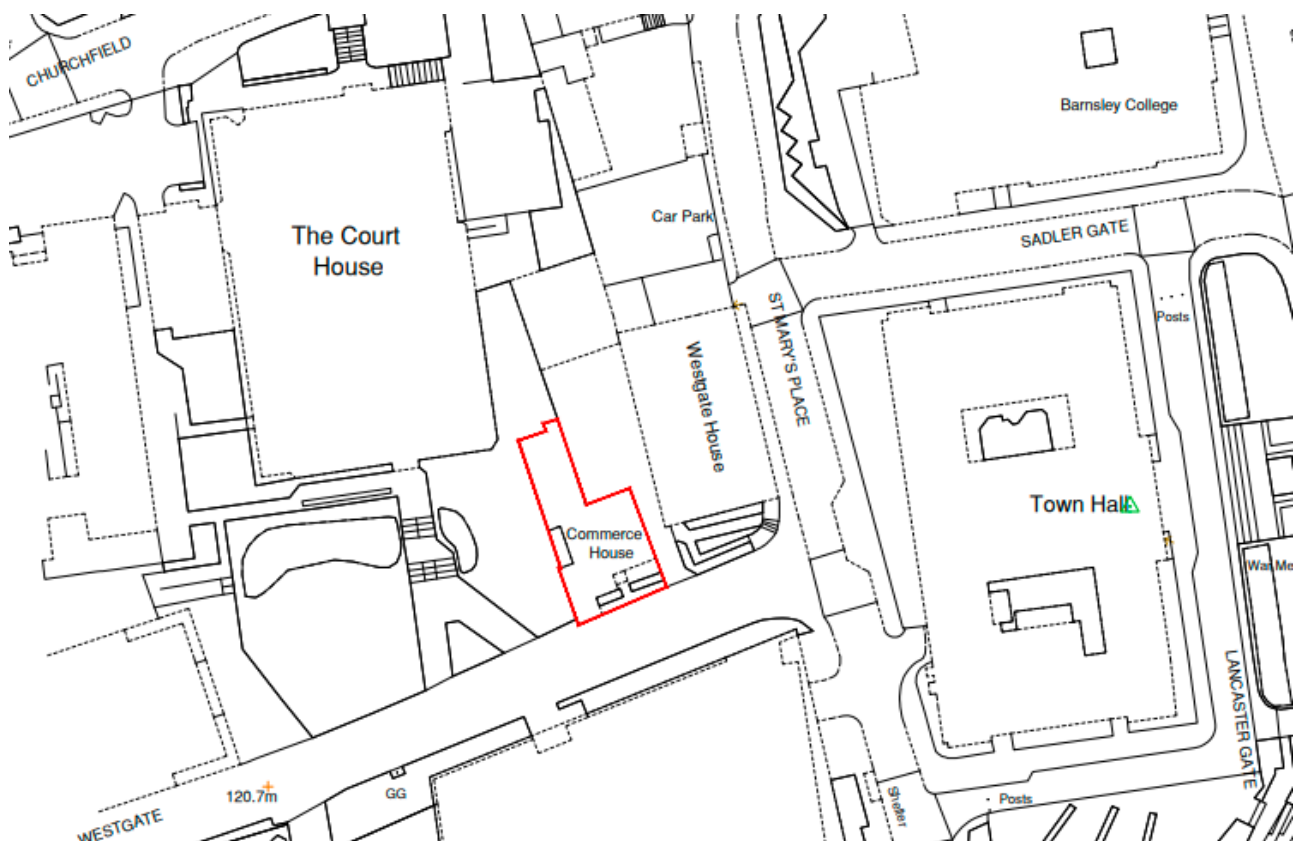
Commerce House 'The Hub', Westgate, Barnsley, S70 2DJ

Display of 1no. non illuminated fascia sign

This application is put before Members as it has been made by a Council employee and relates to a Council owned building.

Site Description

The application site relates to Commerce House, which is a Sandstone, two-storey building with twin gables facing onto Westgate and twin gables facing onto St Mary's Place, with Welsh slate roof tiles. The building is historic, appearing on the first edition 1850 O/S map but is not a listed building. However, the building has been classed as a non-designated local asset of some minor local significance and is located within the newly extended Regent St, Church St, and Market Hill Conservation Area (extended and adopted in June 2024). The building also faces partially onto the rear elevation of the grade-II listed Town Hall. The site is located within the Town Centre in the Westgate/Churchfields district in an area which is mixed use, close to Barnsley MBC offices (Westgate Plaza), the Sixth Form College, the police station and law courts.



Planning History

2022/0723 - Reconfiguration of building frontage to create wheelchair access ramp and associated works including balustrades, new steps and removal of existing front boundary wall (Approved with Conditions)

Proposed Development



The applicant is seeking retrospective approval for a non-illuminated fascia sign. The sign measures 2.7m in height and 0.975m in width

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is also now accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment and mixed-use sites). In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies and are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting on 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering 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. The next review is due to take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances, require it.

Local Plan Allocation – Barnsley Town Centre District 5 Westgate/Churchfields / Regent Street, Church Street, and Market Hill Conservation Area

To the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission the decision on the application must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). In reference to this application, the following policies are relevant:

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. Development will be expected to be compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land.

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.

Policy HE1: The Historic Environment – Positively encourage developments that help in the management, conservation and understanding of the historic environment.

Policy HE3: Developments affecting Historic Buildings – Proposals involving historic buildings should conserve and where appropriate enhance, respect historic precedents, and capitalise on opportunities to reveal significance.

Policy Poll1: Pollution Control and Protection – Development will be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.

Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety – New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

Supplementary Planning Document: Advertisements

The aim of the system is to regulate advertisements in the interests of 'amenity' and 'public safety'. The main issues in determining an application will, therefore, usually be;

- The impact of the advertisement on the appearance of the site or building upon which it is displayed and upon the visual character of the area; and
- The impact of the proposal upon the safety of pedestrians and vehicles.

National Planning Policy Framework

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 places
- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Consultations

Central Ward Councillors were consulted and raised no objections.

The LPA's Conservation Officer was consulted and raised no objections.

Highways Development Control (DC) were consulted and raised no objections.

Representations

The application was advertised by a press notice and a site notice, no comments were received.

Assessment

The main issues for consideration are as follows:

- The acceptability of advertisements
- The impact on the character of the area
- The impact upon heritage assets and conservation area
- The impact on neighbouring residential properties
- The impact on the highway network and highways standards

For the purposes of considering the balance in this application the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale:

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

Principle of Development

The site is located within Barnsley Town Centre with the use of the building already established and acceptable in this location. As such, the erection of signage is deemed acceptable in principle and consent will be granted where the development is appropriate in scale, respectful of the areas character, heritage assets and visual amenities and does not adversely impact the amenity of local residents, or highway safety.

Impact upon Heritage Assets and Visual Amenity

The building (Commerce House) was added to the Barnsley Local List in April 2023 for its historical and architectural significance. It was originally constructed as a Police House along with the adjacent Court House. Designed in a domestic style resembling a Pennine manor house, the Police House was built from local stone and features a blue slate roof. It is believed that the building served as the superintendent's residence, with an adjoining charge room and cells located in the structures at the rear, which enclose one side of the rear courtyard.

In 2022, the building underwent significant exterior and interior modifications. These included the installation of an exterior wheelchair access ramp, along with related works such as balustrades, new steps, and the removal of an existing front boundary wall. Additionally, minor interior alterations were made, including the installation of partitions to create separate rooms. These changes do not impact the building's overall significance.

The building is located within the newly extended Regent Street, Church Street, and Market Hill conservation area (extended and adopted in June 2024) for its historical and architectural interest. The building is mentioned throughout the conservation area appraisal and specifically mentions that the buildings as a group are a good surviving example.

This signage application is retrospective, and the signage is already installed. It is important to note that the conservation area was not extended until 2024. However, the building was locally listed prior to the installation of the fascia sign. Advertisement consent is required for the proposed signage, and the inclusion of the building in the Barnsley Local List adds an additional layer of planning consideration. The sign is non-illuminated and whilst it would have been preferable for it to have been fixed into the joints of the building's stonework rather than the stone face, it is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the historic character of the conservation area of the building and therefore it would not be considered appropriate to remove and re-fix the sign. The Council's Conservation Officer has not raised any objections to the scheme and, in this specific circumstance,

the signage is therefore acceptable with regards its impact on the conservation area. This weighs modestly in favour of the proposal.

Residential Amenity

It is anticipated that there will be no detrimental effect from the new signage for local residents. The sign is non-illuminated, and it will not be prejudicial to the amenity of surrounding buildings in line with the requirements of the SPD Advertisements and Local Plan policies GD1 and D1. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

Highway Safety

There will be no impact upon highway safety, the fascia sign is not illuminated and does not project from the building. This weighs moderately in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

Having balanced all material planning considerations, the proposed retrospective signage will not be significantly harmful to residential and visual amenity nor highway safety. Additionally, there is no significant harm to the heritage asset or conservation area. Therefore, the positive aspects of the proposal are not outweighed by any other material planning considerations. The proposal is therefore, on balance, recommended for approval.

Recommendation

Approve with conditions