

**THIRSK AND MALTON CONSTITUENCY AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE
SUPPLEMENTARY TO COMMITTEE REPORTS**

20th of March 2025

Agenda Item	Application number and Division	Respondent	
1	ZB24/01642/FUL Thirsk	Agent	<p>Email received 6th of March:</p> <p>“Thank you for meeting with us on 27th February 2024 regarding the above planning application. I write in response to your request to provide additional, supporting information.</p> <p>We discussed the scheme in relation to the Conservation Area, and I presented a copy of the Ordnance Survey map, as attached. This shows the site edged in red. All the nearby buildings between the Market Place and Chapel Street are shown dark-shaded, with the proposed extensions shown light-shaded. The burgage plots would, originally, have had small buildings of insubstantial construction on the Market Place frontage with long plots of land behind used for growing vegetables and for domestic animals. Over time, the frontage buildings have been replaced with substantial properties. The difference in their ages and styles is what contributes to the character of the conservation area.</p> <p>Indeed, the bank on the application site is relatively recent, being Edwardian, but it presents a fine elevation to the Market Place, adding to the variety and interest of this frontage. The rear sections of the plots have been variously built on over the centuries and are now largely obscured. They cannot be distinguished from the ground but can be discerned from aerial photographs and also from mapping. This is clear from the attached plan. In particular, the application site is bounded to the west by a large, modern industrial building. To the east it is bounded by the extension to the W H Smith store, which also fronts the Market Place. The burgage plots are now defined</p>

by buildings. The current application retains this definition (as can be seen on the attached plan, and follows the precedent set by earlier development of these plots.

The site has been carefully chosen by the applicant to provide the size of store required to make the scheme viable. (There is more on this below). The design provides for a two-storey element on the Chapel Street frontage which will effectively shield the single-storey part of the building from that side. As this section of the building is close to Chapel Street, it will provide some additional street frontage, thereby enhancing this part of the Conservation Area.

The applicant has provided the following information about Yorkshire Trading and their proposals for a new store in Thirsk:

"We would like to make the following submission in support of our proposed development of the former Barclays Bank, 24 Market Place, Thirsk.

- Yorkshire Trading Company is a secure, long-established retailer that has shown loyal and unwavering support for local town high streets for many years. We have successfully managed through issues such as: the 2001 Foot and Mouth epidemic that seriously affected the rural economy; the economic downturn in 2007/8 when many business failed to survive; the social and economic drama of the Covid pandemic which similarly closed a great many stores and now today's fiscal difficulties adding to the empty units on our High Streets and town centres. As a family store managed and owned by Yorkshire people, we have dealt with these and other difficulties, maintaining and growing a workforce approaching 600 staff – not insignificant as we approach a rise in unemployment under the impending tax changes specifically affecting businesses.
- The Directors of YTC have searched for a suitable Thirsk property for over 20 years. There are no suitable units of size on Thirsk High Street, therefore, creating a successful retail enterprise out of this vacant unit is a

			<p>'once in a generation' opportunity and can only be achieved by developing an existing property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For a potential store to be a viable proposition, we will need sufficient space to merchandise our full range of products and to provide a traditional 'store shopping experience'. As mentioned below, to service the products that smaller independents can no longer provide on today's high street, it needs the full one stop shop experience. We simply would not be able to make this considerable investment without adequate space being achieved. Developing a two-storey shopping environment is not an option because second-floor retailing is not cost effective. There are many issues including potentially doubling staffing costs, reduced footfall, security issues, and the provision of expensive and problematic access solutions for the mobility impaired people. Our development will provide a complete, ground-floor, shopping experience allowing unimpeded access for the enjoyment of everyone in Thirsk, residents and visitors alike.• YTC trading on Thirsk High Street will not just support the bustling busy nature of the town, but it will bring further footfall to the established businesses already trading there. Some of the smaller, existing, businesses may find that extra footfall to be the difference between failure and success in the tight margins and increased overheads today. Our presence will only help to anchor the high street, something essential to all towns, market or otherwise.• We will, of course, be adding to local employment – in the region of 25 to 30 new store team members (the majority of whom will come from the town), as well as support staff such as delivery drivers, retail area managers, warehouse team, admin support. Overall, we are looking at 35 jobs dependent on this development in Thirsk. Our store team will all be people who are further contributing to the local economy.• The proposals do not exclusively affect our business. The upper floors are currently home to the solicitors practice Eccles Heddon who have a need to
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			<p>increase their premises. We have been pleased to negotiate a new agreement for them that includes more space (expanding into the existing offices formerly occupied by Barclays) – keeping them in the confines of Thirsk rather than seeking new premises elsewhere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As a company we are proven to be well suited to market towns like Thirsk having been successful in similar towns such as Richmond and Malton for several decades. As the small independent specialist stores have been forced to close (ironmongers, wool shops etc) we have fulfilled that need in a one floor experience – again, not only helping to keep the customer shopping in the town but allowing them to browse their purchases and enjoy traditional British service rather than having to resort to the giant American online stores or out of town developments. All of which contributes to the benefits of working and living in Thirsk as well as minimising travel costs, energy use and emissions.• The attractive stone frontage that was the mark of so many banks – sadly closing in so many towns leaving an abandoned building – will be preserved as much as possible. There will be minimal impact on the front façade, save for the entrance and exit, of course.• The rear of the store will be developed to accommodate residential premises, in support of the governments 'Residential Above Shops' scheme, allowing local people to afford to stay local. The refurbished building will be repaired with energy conservation in mind and the project will be conducted locally – not flying in a team from a distant head office, but with commitment in the future establishment. <p>In short, we submit that this development by our local, long established company, will bring increased footfall, greater employment, keep shoppers local, prevent another empty premises blotting the street, provide residential accommodation, keep a local business in the town, accommodate disabled shoppers and can only be an asset to Thirsk."</p>
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		<p>Officer Response</p>	<p>Whilst it is true to say that burgage plots can be easily identified from the air and through mapping, it is not the case that they cannot be experienced from the ground. The regular, long, linear plot boundaries can be understood as an individual makes their way along Chapel Street, with the vast majority of development following the historic pattern, particularly the ability to see that linear development in relation to the buildings fronting Market Place.</p> <p>It is also true to an extent that the burgage plots are defined by buildings and structures, but these do not generally totally obscure the plots and, where they do (as in the case of the warehouse to the immediate west of the site), there is clear harm to that setting. As discussed above, the relationship between structures within burgage plots is such that it allows a visual connection between Market Place and Chapel Street, with the large buildings facing Market Place, in combination with boundary features and long, linear development to the rear, ensuring that the historical plot pattern can be seen. This is considered not to be the case, in this instance, with the first-floor (flats) element, totally obscuring the visual connection between Market Place and Chapel Street.</p> <p>When discussing harm to a heritage asset, precedent does not exist. This is because an application is either harmful or not, and this must be weighed against the prevailing character of the area, rather than whether something currently exists in the area – the question is therefore: “Will this cause harm?”. Officers, the Conservation Officer and Historic England have determined that there would be harm caused beyond any other existing development on Chapel Street and so the presence of pre-existing inappropriate development within the vicinity should not be a guide to acceptability.</p> <p>The figure given for full-time employees differs significantly from that given within the application form (35 vs the 24 [12 full-time, 12 part-time – 18 full-time equivalent roles]). There has been no documentation within the submission to ratify either number.</p>
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		Officer Response	<p>Following receipt of the above, the flats were measured again as below:</p> <p>Flat 1 (The Smaller Flat) – 2 bedrooms 3 people – Approx. 62m² (NDSS Req. 61m²)</p> <p>Flat 2 (The Larger Flat) – 2 bedrooms 4 people – Approx. 69.5m² (NDSS Req. 70m²)</p> <p>Additionally, whilst the bedrooms are large enough in floorspace terms, all fail to meet technical requirements (c), (d) and (e) relating to minimum widths (with those in the larger flat falling short by ~5cm of NDSS; those within the smaller flat being between ~5-15cm short of meeting the NDSS).</p> <p>Whilst these are slim margins, the figures set out in the NDSS are minimums and should be achieved at all times in order to achieve compliance with the Local Plan, regardless of how limited those margins are.</p> <p>However, it should be pointed out that, according to the above, the smaller flat does now fall within NDSS and that Reason 3 relating to refusal should be altered to reflect this.</p>

		Reason for Refusal	<p>Reason 3 for refusal (NDSS) should be amended to the following:</p> <p>One of the proposed residential units does not meet the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). A two-bedroom, four-person unit should have a minimum internal floorspace of 70m², whilst the unit in question measures at 69.5m². Further, the bedroom sizes fail to meet the technical standards (c), (d) and (e) of the NDSS. This failure to meet the NDSS means that Local Plan Policies HG2 and HG5 and the requirements of the Housing SPD are not met by the proposal.</p>
		Additional Plan	<p>A block plan was provided by the agent on the 14th of March, identifying the built form within the burgage plots.</p>
		Officer Comment	<p>The approach taken within the supplied plan is overly simplistic, with no variation in levels taken into account, which, as discussed above, aids the legibility of the burgage plots. The plan clearly shows that the scale of development proposed is far beyond what is present in the area, with the only other development of a similar scale being the warehouse adjacent, which even then does not fill the entire plot.</p>