

Cinema site timeline

The former cinema site is situated within a conservation area on the south-western corner of the junction of Mount Pleasant Road and Church Road in the heart of the town centre.

The site was previously home to a three-screen cinema, together with a number of units fronting Mount Pleasant Road and Church Road that were occupied shops and restaurants and an extensive area of parking to the rear. The cinema and associated buildings were constructed in the 1930s.

Timeline

- 2000 - ABC cinema closes
- 2004 - site purchased (GLN Copenhagen) no planning application for development submitted
- 2006 - Council negotiated running a design competition with the developer, overseen by RIBA
- 2008 - a new owner (Rydall Properties) is given planning permission for mixed-use development
- 2010 - Council bids £5.6m for the site using Red Book valuation (i.e. value assessed following strict professional standards set by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors)
- 2011 - site purchased (Bellhouse Joseph/Carlyle) no planning application for development submitted
- 2014 - demolition work begins following pressure from the Council
- 2015 - a new owner (Altitude Real Estate) takes over
- 2017 - planning permission granted (Altitude Real Estate)
- 2019 - a new owner (Elysian Residences) is given permission to amend the approved scheme
- 2020 - site is for sale
- 2021 - a new owner (Retirement Villages Group)

The Council's planning policies say development of the site should result in there being a mix of uses.

FAQs

What has the Council done to progress development of the site?

The Council has made every effort to assist each new owner with their ambitions for the cinema site, this includes holding meetings with owners and their prospective occupiers to offer advice and assistance.

The derelict buildings on the site were demolished because of legal pressure brought to bear by the Council.

Since the site was first vacant we have taken legal advice on the options open to us.

Why hasn't the Council undertaken a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) on the site?

The Council has taken expert legal advice on this and formed the view that a CPO is not a financially viable option. The legal position is complex: the Council would need to compensate the owner and take on the liability and find the money to develop the site.