

Application Reference Number:		2024/1048	
Application Type:		Full	
Proposal Description:		Conversion of the existing building to form offices and 5no. flats - Phase 2 (Phase 1 one (Flats 1-4) of the conversion has been carried out under prior approval - 2023/0666)	
Location:		Drill Hall, 11 Eastgate, Barnsley, S70 2EU	
Applicant:		Mr Shaun Webber	
Third-party representations:	None	Parish:	None
		Ward:	Central

Summary:

This planning application has been submitted by Mr Shaun Webber and seeks full planning permission for the conversion of the existing building to form offices and 5no. flats. The building has already seen the creation of 4 flats (1-4) under prior approval - 2023/0666.

The site falls within town centre district 3 (Courthouse Campus) as allocated by the adopted Local Plan and is also within the Regent Street/Church Street/Market Hill Conservation Area. Development comprising alterations to an existing building are considered acceptable in principle if proposals would not significantly adversely affect residential amenity, highway safety, and where satisfactory standards of design are achieved. Furthermore, the alterations must not impact upon the setting of the Regent Street/Church Street/Market Hill Conservation Area.

The proposal would have no adverse impact on highway safety, residential or visual amenity and is considered acceptable in policy terms. The 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:

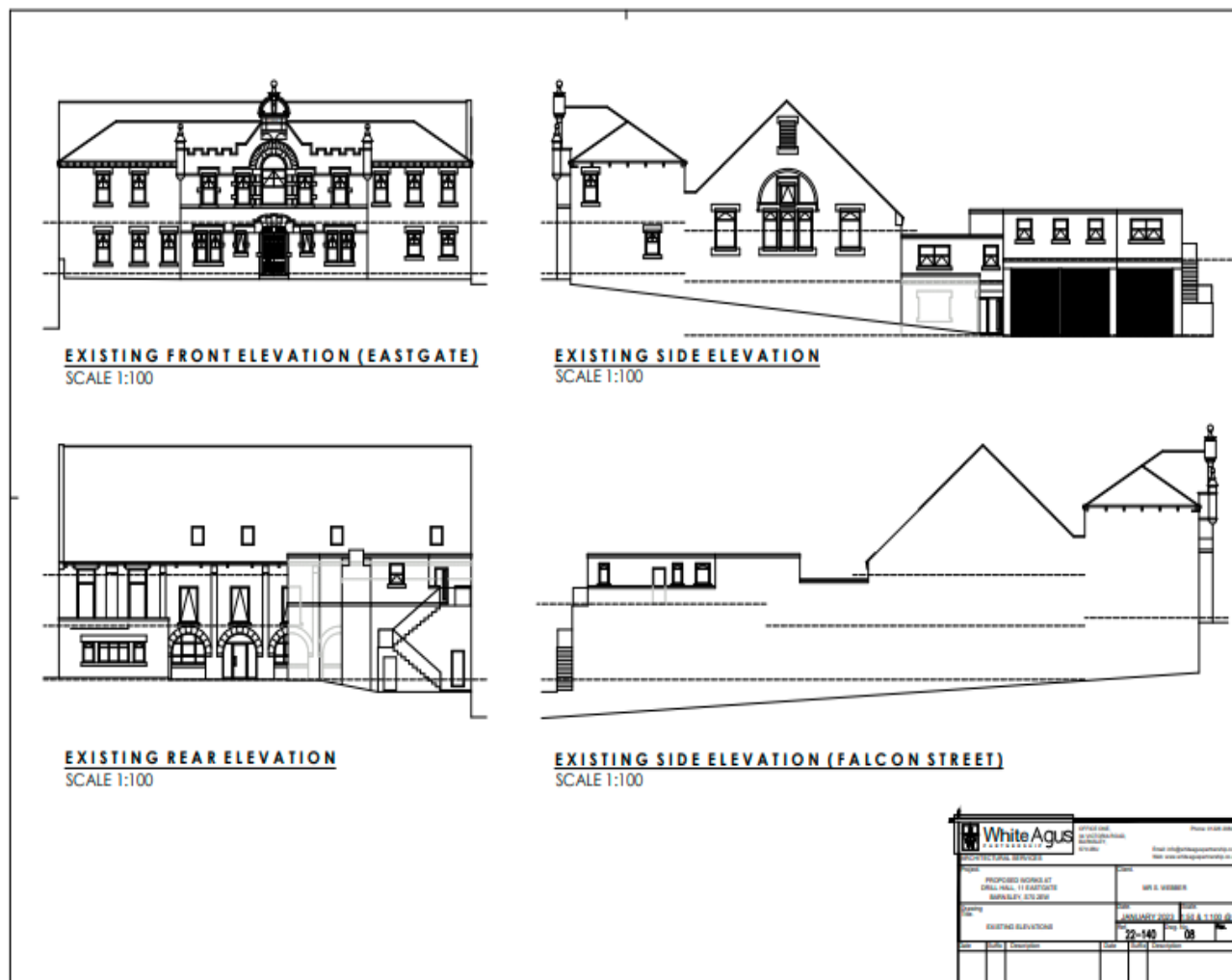
Approve subject to conditions

Site Description

The application relates to a 2/3 storey stone built building known as the 'Drill Hall'. The building is locally listed and also located within the Regent Street/Church Street/Market Hill Conservation Area. The building has already seen the creation of 4 flats (1-4) under prior approval - 2023/0666. The building was previously used as an office building by the Barnsley Chronicle and associated companies.

The building fronts Eastgate with the front section containing smaller offices. The rear section of the building contains the larger 'drill hall' which is more open plan in nature with a mezzanine deck inside. Attached to the rear of the building is a flat roofed offshoot, constructed of stone and render, which has office rooms on the first floor and mainly storage, accessed by roller shutters, on the ground floor. To the rear of the site is a detached storage building which has a steel frame and corrugated metal cladding. There is a car park to the rear of the building which is accessed via a single driveway from Eastgate running along the Southern elevation of the building.

The site is located within Barnsley Town Centre with a mix of uses evident. Opposite Eastgate is Barnsley Chronicles offices and printing press. To the north of the site is a public car park with Barnsley College buildings beyond. To the south is a carpark associated with Digital Media Centre 2, To the east of the site is the public car park accessed off County Way.



Planning History

There are various planning applications associated with the site.

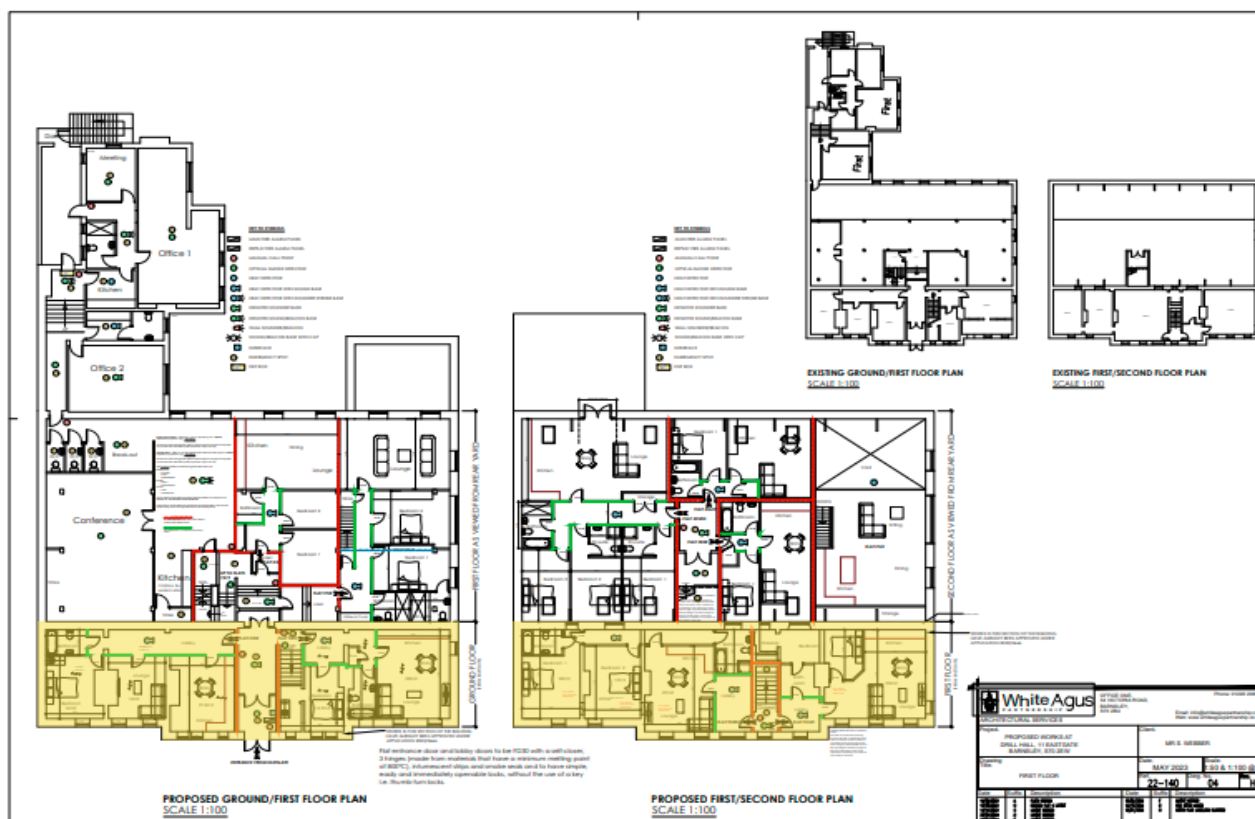
Application Reference	Description	Status
B/93/0249/BA	Reconstruction of boundary wall	Historic
B/94/0511/BA	Change of use of existing buildings to offices and stores	Historic
2023/0666	Conversion of existing office part of building on ground and first floor into 4no flats (Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Us Class E) to Dwellinghouses (Use Class C3))	Prior Approval - Not Required

Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking permission for the conversion of the existing building to form offices and 5no. flats. The proposal can broadly be summarised as follows:

- Lower Ground floor – existing office space into reconfigured office space.
- Ground Floor – existing office space into reconfigured office/conference room space and 2no. flats.
- First floor – unused loft space converted into 3no. flats.

The total 5no. flats comprise 2no. one-bed flats, 2no. two-bed flats and 1no. three-bed flat; this residential element of the proposals therefore requires 6 off-street parking spaces. The proposal also includes the addition of a dormer window on the rear elevation.



Relevant Policies

The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires 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 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 – Regent Street/Church Street/Market Hill Conservation Area / Town Centre District 3 (Courthouse Campus)

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 SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development – States that proposals for development will be approved where 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 GD1 below will be applied to all development.

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 capitalize on opportunities to reveal significance.

Policy TC1: Town Centres – New retail and town centre development will be directed to centres to maintain and enhance their vitality and viability and that a sequential approach will be used to assess proposals for new retail and town centre development outside the designated centres.

Policy BTC21: Courthouse Campus – We will allow the following types of development in the Courthouse Campus District; education and community facilities, offices, developments designed to support the creative and digital industries, residential development, including live-work units, multi storey car parking, a new public park and improved public spaces.

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 T3: New development and Sustainable Travel – Expects new development to be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, be accessible to public transport and meet the needs of pedestrians and cycles. Also sets criteria in relation to minimum levels of parking; provision of transport statements and of travel plans.

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.

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

In December 2024, The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") which is the most recent revision of the original Framework, published first in 2012 and updated a number of times, providing the overarching planning framework for England. It 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. This 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 which is at the heart of the framework (paragraph 10) and plans and decisions should apply this presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). The NPPF confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental; each of these aspects are mutually dependent. The most relevant sections are:

- Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 - Decision making
- Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic 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 it into account when taking decisions.

Supplementary Planning Documents:

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 most pertinent SPD's in this case are:

- Parking
- Sustainable Travel

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

Other Guidance

- South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide

Consultations

Central Ward Councillors were consulted and raised no objections.

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

Enterprising Barnsley were consulted and raised no objections.

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

Highways Drainage were consulted and raised no objections.

Pollution Control were consulted and raised no objections subject to conditions.

Waste Management were consulted and raised no objections.

Yorkshire Water were consulted and raised no objections.

Representations

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

Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties, a site notice erected at the site and a press notice issued, no comments were received.

Assessment

The main issues for consideration are as follows:

- The acceptability of the alterations
- The impact on the character of the host building
- The impact on the setting of the conservation area
- The impact on residential amenity of the proposed units and of the neighbouring residents
- The impact on highway safety

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 application site is in a town centre location where national and local policy indicates that main town centre uses will be directed in order to maintain the vitality and viability of centres. The site falls within the Courthouse Campus Town Centre District. As such, Local Plan Policies TC1: Town Centres and BTC21: Courthouse Campus are relevant which generally expect development to support and maintain the Town Centre's sub-regional role as the Borough's dominant Centre.

Suitable town Centre uses will be supported as this policy allows a range of uses aimed to consolidate and build on the success of recent developments within the District.

The proposed development and therefore change of use of the building is acceptable because Policy BTC21 also states *“we will also allow education and community facilities, offices, developments designed to support the creative and digital industries, residential development, including live-work units, multi storey car parking, a new public park and improved public spaces”* and the proposed use can be deemed to fall with those categories. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

Alterations to the building are acceptable in principle if they would be of an appropriate scale and design, would not be detrimental to the amenity afforded to adjacent properties and visual amenity, have no significant detrimental impact upon highway safety and would not significantly impact on the setting of the borough’s heritage assets.

Design, Heritage and Visual Amenity

This application seeks permission for phase two of a conversion to create several office spaces and 5 No. flats within the Drill Hall on Eastgate. The Eastgate frontage illustrates the military origins of the building with a castellated central bay, topped with a commemoration plaque and date stone (from 1896) of the Yorkshire and Lancashire Battalion. Liberal use of ashlar and dressed stone adorn the principal elevation, and this clearly contributes positively to the conservation area which was recently extended to include the Drill Hall. The high quality architectural external appearance, and the historic significance of the Drill Hall resulted in it being adopted as a locally listed NDHA on 11.09.22.

Within the building, the Eastgate block and the ground floor at the rear has already been converted to residential (under prior approval 2023/0666). Behind the (now converted) battalion offices towards the north end of the building, there was a modern mezzanine, inserted to span the once open drill hall by the previous owner. This was inserted to create open plan office space for the Barnsley Chronicle. Being modern, this is of no historic merit.

Consequently, the proposal to subdivide the spaces into residential (Flats 5-9) on the eastern side of the building and office / conference spaces at the first floor raise no concerns from a heritage perspective. The second floor is entirely residential. The conversion requires the installation of a number of subdivisions and internal cross walls, but the main structural and historic envelope remain unaltered. In fact, external alterations are limited to a small gabled dormer on the rear of the building that looks out over the roof of Office 2.

Regarding the rear offices, these are modern and remain largely unaltered apart from minor further subdivision. Worthy of note are various recently uncovered inscriptions of officer’s names in the fabric of the historic walls which have been preserved in situ. The most significant internal feature is the memorial to soldiers lost in the great war which has substantial historic merit. This has been preserved in situ and will be retained.

Overall, the proposal retains the most significant historic elements, and the external appearance of the building is generally unaltered. The addition of the dormer window to the rear is not deemed harmful. As such there is no harm and it is deemed that the proposal will not be significantly impactful upon the conservation area nor harmful to the visual amenities of the locality. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

Residential Amenity

In terms of noise from surrounding uses, it is noted that the proposed flats will be located on a predominantly commercial street however existing residential uses have already been approved in the same building. In addition, the LPA’s Pollution Control team have raised no objections to the scheme subject to a construction method statement and noise impact assessment being conditioned. This weighs moderately in favour of the proposal.

The proposed internal dimensions for all five flats meet the overall spacing standards for each flat type within the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide. Flat 5 and flat 6 are two bedroomed flats with the minimum floorspace to be 62sqm and the proposed flats have approximately 143sqm and 66 sqm of floorspace respectively. Flat 7 is a three bedroomed flat with the minimum floorspace to be 77sqm and the proposed flat has approximately 131sqm of floorspace. Flat 8 and flat 9 are one bedroomed flats with the minimum floorspace to be 46sqm and the proposed flats have approximately 47sqm and 46 sqm of floorspace respectively. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposal as the required floorspace is achieved.

Shared private amenity space for flats should be a minimum of 50sqm plus and additional 10sqm per unit either as a balcony space or added shared private space. The residents have access to a large rear yard area however the quality of this space is poor and is predominantly used for parking therefore it cannot be classed as quality private amenity space. The amount of shared private space to be provided can also depend on the quality, quantity and accessibility of local public open space.

Within the wider area of the Town Centre there is the Dearne Valley Country Park and the Dearne Valley Green Heart partnership, which is one of the only 12 nature improvement areas in England which is creating a healthy and attractive natural environment providing plenty of outdoor amenity space within the local area. Given that the flats are unlikely to appeal to families, it is considered that there is acceptable outdoor amenity space for the proposed scheme given the nearby facilities as well as the close proximity to the Town Centre and the amenities provided there.

The proposal is not expected to be detrimental to the residential amenity of the neighbours nor the future occupiers in line with the standards set within the SPD and the SYRDG. The addition of the dormer window will not lead to an increase in overlooking significantly above the existing levels. The proposal is considered to be in compliance with Local Plan Policy GD1: General Development and is acceptable in terms of residential amenity. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

Highways Safety

There will be no impact upon highway safety. Part of the ground floor and first floor already has approval for the conversion of existing office space into 4no. flats (2023/0666). In addition to the existing approval, these current proposals can broadly be summarised as follows:

- Lower Ground floor – existing office space into reconfigured office space.
- Ground Floor – existing office space into reconfigured office/conference room space and 2no. flats.
- First floor – unused loft space converted into 3no. flats.

The total 5no. flats comprise 2no. one-bed flats, 2no. two-bed flats and 1no. three-bed flat; this residential element of the proposals therefore requires 6 off-street parking spaces.

The application form states that there is 1281m² of office space and that 450m² would be lost due to the scheme, thereby leaving 831m² of office space. At a ratio of 1 parking space per 30m² of floor area, the office element of the proposals requires 28 off-street parking spaces. The total parking requirement for the proposals is therefore 34 spaces. The level of parking is as existing and therefore the required number of spaces is achieved. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

The application site is a 2/3 storey building situated within Barnsley town centre, it is therefore considered to be in a sustainable location having good pedestrian and cycle access as well as being located approx. 300m from the interchange and within close proximity of the amenities and facilities of the town centre. Although the sustainable location complies with NPPF 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' policies and Barnsley Local Plan Policy T3 'New Development and Sustainable Travel', the proposals could further encourage cycling as a form of active travel and an alternative to the private motor car and should particularly be promoted given the town centre location.

With reference to the amended plan in relation to parking and cycle storage and the submission of additional information, it is noted that the existing parking layout within the site is to remain

unchanged and has sufficient provision to serve the development. It is indicated that cycle storage facilities for the parking of 8no. bicycles are to be provided to the front of the property although no specific details have been provided; this can however be dealt with by way of a condition. It is therefore considered that the proposals do not adversely impact upon the highway and are acceptable from a highways perspective. This weighs significantly in favour of the proposal.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

For the reasons given above, and taking all other matters into consideration, the proposal complies with the relevant plan policies and planning permission should be granted subject to necessary conditions. Under the provisions of the NPPF, the application is considered to be a sustainable form of development and is therefore recommended for approval.

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 has worked with the applicant to find solutions to the following issues that arose whilst dealing with the planning application:

- Confirmation of existing and proposed parking layout
- Addition of cycle storage facilities for the parking of 8no. bicycles

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 objections, 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.