

Design & Access Statement

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**Proposed Conversion of Existing Building
into 5 No Dwelling Houses**

**26 Doncaster Road
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S70 1TL**

1. Background

The property which forms the basis of this application namely 26 Doncaster Road, Barnsley, was originally built in late the Victorian era as a workhouse. Since then, it's use has always been to provide accommodation in one way or another and it's most recent occupational use was that of a private dwelling house for the owner. Immediately prior to that, it was used as a hostel for the homeless.

Overall, it is known that views in all directions of the property are not particularly pleasant and for this reason it is considered that it would be very difficult to convert the property into anything other than dwellings for student accommodation of which there is now a need in Barnsley in view of the new Huddersfield University Barnsley Centre on Church Street.

2. Physical Characteristics

The existing three storey property is constructed from red brick as are most of the surrounding commercial premises. The character is one of a run down institutional building as opposed to say that of a block of modern apartments. There are a few disused outbuildings and garages and very little in the way of landscaping the latter of which is probably due to the difference in levels (approximately 10m) between Doncaster Road and Lambra Road thereby making landscaping on such a steep sloping site very difficult to achieve.

3. Social Characteristics

As previously stated, the property is situated in a commercial sector of the town and is surrounded on all sides by commerce. Consequently, it is not anticipated that the use of the building as dwelling houses/student accommodation will cause problems for existing residents as there does not appear to be any. The proposal will include its own self contained off road parking though there is likely to be some intensification of use in respect of the access off Doncaster Road.

4. Economic Characteristics

There is a growing need for student accommodation in Barnsley now that the Huddersfield University Barnsley Centre has successfully established itself. Student numbers at the University Centre are expected to rise to a total of 2000 in the next few years. The lack of student accommodation in Barnsley is in itself a limit to the growth of the University Centre. Access on foot to the town centre and the University Centre is extremely well catered for given the location of the proposal.

5. Planning Policy

Despite always having been used for occupational purposes, the property itself is situated in a commercial/business area of Barnsley located between Doncaster Road and Alhambra Road. Volume 2 of the Barnsley Urban Community Area document and the Town Centre UDP both place the site in the policy area 'Doncaster Road / Sheffield Road Fringe Area (6)'. Area 6 is described in paragraph 8.10 of the document as *'Principally an area of small scale mixed retail/office and commercial uses which are likely to remain. Efforts will be directed to securing the upgrading and enhancement of the area, but essentially this area should continue to perform the function of providing small scale opportunities.'*

Therefore on this basis, existing planning policy indicates that continued use as dwellings would be acceptable – a fact verified by speaking to Steve Kirkham of Barnsley MBC in early August 2008.

6. Involvement

The main consultee to date has been Steve Kirkham of Barnsley MBC who was approached by the agent (Anthony Ward) for advice as to the type of development which was likely to be supported by the Planning Authority. It was explained to Mr Kirkham that the preferred use of the property and land was that of continued use as accommodation as opposed demolishing the property completely for commercial development.

7. Evaluation

Overall, after consultation with Steve Kirkham, a knowledge of the land useage of the surroundings, the need for student accommodation in Barnsley and a desire by the owner to keep the heraditament in residential use, it was decided to produce a design which would hopefully achieve these goals.

8. Design

On the basis of the above considerations, it was decided that development of the dwellings for student accommodation would probably be the best way forward as it would serve a growing need and demand within Barnsley whilst not extending the dwelling areas in any way. In fact, part of the property will be demolished in order to make a car park and provide the required turning circles for HGV's such as bin lorries and emergency vehicles. It is anticipated that the majority if not all the occupants would be students and they would tend to walk to the University Centre and the shopping areas within Barnsley.

Access for wheelchair users is also catered for with the inclusion of an alternative access via a concrete ramp from Lambra Road to dwellings 1-4. All the stairs from the car park are ambulant in that they have a rise of 155mm and a going of 280mm, 1.2m wide and a flat landing after every 9 risers. The ground floor layouts of dwellings 1-3, being comprised primarily of stud partition walls may easily be amended to include a ground floor bedroom and toilet/washing facilities compliant with Part M of the Building Regulations.

Layouts on other floors in all the dwellings 1-5 are also stud partitions and similarly may be amended if required.

Demand on neighbouring businesses is expected to be minimal though the availability of a new car park may cause a problem for the occupants of the proposal with vehicles of non-residents being parked illegally therein.

Ownership of the proposal will still remain in the hands of the current owner (or his successor) who will acquire the role of landlord with the dwellings being rented to the occupants. The owner therefore will remain in control of items such as lighting, maintenance of the common exterior areas (car park, gardens, exterior painting and other repairs to the fabric of the building).

There are two means of accessing the internal courtyard i.e. via Doncaster Road or via a concrete ramp off Lambra Road. Of these, the former will be the main access to and from the proposed dwellings which is expected to create an intensification of use. The other access may be used in emergencies if necessary as well as providing disabled access.

Externally, it was considered prudent to keep the car park approximately level with the roads immediately outside the boundary wall. This will require infill with inert material (from the demolition) and will be topped with tarmac. Perimeter French Drains will direct surface water to the 20cu.m. soakaway on the site.

The levels required by the car park mean that a retaining wall will be required between the car park and the lower courtyard. The appearance of this will be mitigated to a large degree by the use of terraced garden beds which will also add mass and strength to the retaining properties of the wall.

Overall, the appearance from the courtyard will be improved considerably with the removal of the fire escape (from when it was a hostel for the homeless) and all the external soil pipes (in favour of internal ones). All windows are to be replaced with UPVC double glazed units which comply with the escape requirements of Part B of the Building Regulations. The views from other directions will be largely unchanged other than the new windows.

Overall, with the building being once again returned to occupational use and the inclusion of a lit car park, it is expected that the area will improve in terms of safety.

Signed

Anthony T Ward (Agent), 21/11/2008