

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 29th May 2018

Application	4
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Application Number:	17/03156/FULM	Application Expiry Date:	11th April 2018
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Application Type:	Planning FULL Major
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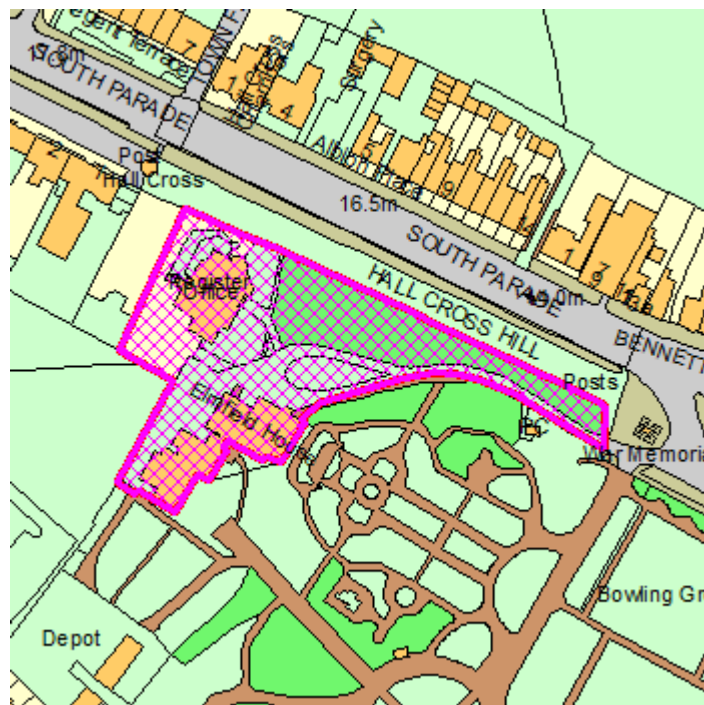
Proposal Description:	Change of use of B1 offices/registrars to 30 apartments (Elmfield House x22 & Registrar x8).
At:	Elmfield House South Parade Doncaster DN1 2EH

For:	Davis
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Third Party Reps:	7	Parish:	
		Ward:	Town

Author of Report	Gareth Stent
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MAIN RECOMMENDATION:	Grant
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1.0 Reason for Report

1.1 The application was previously requested to be presented to committee by former Cllr John McHale. Given Cllr McHale could no longer address the committee in his capacity as a councillor, the two remaining town ward members were asked if they still required it to go to committee. Cllr Dave Shaw suggested it still be determined by planning committee.

2.0 Proposal and Background

2.1 The application seeks the conversion of Elmfield House to 22 apartments and the conversion of the former Registrar to 8 apartments. The scheme has been amended on several occasions to address concerns from consultees and removed the 15 bed HiMO element from the Registrar, in favour of flats to appease local concerns. The proposal has also reduced the amount of flats in Elmfield House (from 24-22) to create more spacious apartments and overcome concerns raised by consultees.

2.2 The site straddles both Doncaster the South Parade and Doncaster - Bennetthorpe Conservation Areas. Elmfield House is a Grade II listed building that lies within a parkland setting and is considered to be a park and garden of local historic interest. The building is now in private ownership having been sold by Doncaster Council.

3.0 Relevant Site History

3.1 The site has had a series of planning permissions however only the accompanying Listed building consent is directly relevant.

- 18/00725/LBCM -Listed building consent in connection with conversion of Elmfield House to apartments.

4.0 Representations

4.1 This application has been advertised by site notice, press notice and via direct neighbour letters. 4 letters of representation were received signed by 7 signatures in total, including a letter and call to committee request from former councillor John McHale. The concerns are as follows:

- The conversion of the registry office to a HiMO and the intensity of conversion of Elmfield House is likely to have a detrimental impact on the character of the area given South Parade is the most prestigious street in Doncaster Town Centre.
- Lack of private amenity space for residents, no areas for storage, bicycles, refuse, external laundry drying etc contrary to Policy CS 14.
- The scheme is too intensive. The overall internal floor-space is insufficient and the size of individual rooms are large enough for the intended purpose, the size of amenity space is sufficient for the number of occupiers.

- This property is in the grounds of Elmfield Park and if this is correct how can it be converted into multiple flats surely the park belongs to the people of Doncaster.
- Concern over the lack of parking and overspill onto the already congested Roman Road. Concerns over waste collection, where are they to be stored etc. Concern over the likely occupants of the flats/HMO.
- Concern over the impact of the use on the adjacent public park, deterring use of the park.
- Elmfield House is a Grade 2 Listed Building along with many other properties in South Parade and is recognised by English Heritage as an important building. The proposed use as a high capacity residential property will be detrimental the long term future to the building and may threaten that future.
- Conversion of the property for residential use is contrary to Doncaster's heritage strategy which seeks to place heritage firmly in people's sense of place, pride and learning, increasing interest, awareness and participation in Doncaster's heritage, and improving community cohesion and wellbeing through fostering a positive sense of place. This aim seeks to get more people interested and involved but this proposal is likely to drive people away.
- Another Strategic Aim of the Strategy is: To preserve, protect and respect our heritage in order to create a better environment to live, study, work and visit. It is most unlikely that using the buildings for the proposed use will support this aim. Transferring assets to private owners should only be carried out if it is judged to be in the best interests of the heritage (page 14 of the Heritage Strategy).
- The proposed use of the buildings may possibly bring local residents using the park into conflict with the people housed in the buildings. Parks and open spaces are one of the most important things residents consider when thinking about the place they live, and nothing should be done close or within parks and open spaces which is detrimental to the use and enjoyment of them.
- The proposal fails to accord with Policy CS15: Valuing Our Historic Environment and Policy CS17 Green Infrastructure.
- The area in which Elmfield House and Elmfield Park is located is a mix of high quality offices and good privately owned residential property, an area frequented by business people, families, and many schoolchildren. Locating this proposal in Elmfield House will certainly have an affect on the area, but it will not enhance it.

5.0 Relevant Consultations

5.1 Yorkshire Water - No objection.

5.2 Education - Less than 10 2-bed units (family homes) therefore no contribution required.

5.3 Civic Trust - Doncaster Civic Trust objects to part of this application. The conversion of the listed building to small apartments could create a sustainable future for the building, and is considered satisfactory. This is subject to the protection of any surviving historic fabric, and careful scrutiny of any proposed changes to windows and doors needed to effect the change of use. However, it is felt that the former Registry Office building would be better also developed as apartments. This would reduce the number of residents and vehicles, and create a higher quality of development. The Trust is particularly concerned about the future of the trees and the impact on them of the car parking.

5.4 Conservation- Initial concerns relating to the accuracy of the plans, information and intensiveness of the proposal, all of which have been addressed by the submission of amended plans.

5.5 Trees – No objections based on the revised plans.

5.6 Ecology – No objection given it's an internal conversion so the roof and loft spaces should not be affected. Provided there is also no plan for new external lighting on the buildings then no objections.

5.7 Environmental Health: Original concerns over size of apartments and outlook as some units have no windows: This has been overcome by the submission of amended plans.

5.8 Design: Objected to the initial plans as some of the rooms had no windows creating an unacceptable living environment. The apartments were also too small with no storage. The amended plans create a much better scheme and whilst a metre or two short in some areas for floor area on the whole acceptable.

5.9 Pollution Control - Historic maps show the above application is located adjacent to a former depot and is for a sensitive end use (multiple apartments and HMO). A contaminated land assessment was originally required, however given no new building is occurring such an assessment is not required. A YALPAG form was instead completed which satisfied officers.

5.10 Highways DM -The highway officer noted the parking isn't satisfactory, however is existing and sufficient space exists for 1 allocated space per unit exists. Whilst one space per unit doesn't strictly comply with the parking standards adopted by Doncaster, given that the units are predominantly 1 bedroomed and it is in a town centre location, 1 space in this instance is acceptable. The access is constrained and concern exists over servicing of the units both by delivery vehicles and refuse collection vehicles.

6.0 Relevant Policy and Strategic Context

6.1 The site is allocated as CF1 community facility as defined by the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan 1998.

6.2 National Planning Policy Framework;

Chapter 1 - Building a strong, competitive economy

Chapter 4 - Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 6 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Chapter 8 - Promoting healthy communities;

Chapter 7 - Requiring good design

Chapter 11- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; especially heritage policies contained in sections 128, 129, 131 and 132.

6.3 Doncaster Council Core Strategy; 2011-2028

CS 1 - Quality of Life

CS 2 - Growth and Regeneration Strategy

CS8 - Doncaster Town Centre

CS 9 - Providing Travel Choice

CS 12 - Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

CS 14 - Design and Sustainable Construction

CS 15 - Conservation of the Historic Environment

6.4 Doncaster Unitary Development Plan; 1998 ; Saved policies:

CF1 - Community Facility.

CS 4 - Surplus facilities.

RL 4 - Local Public Open Space Provision

ENV 25 - Conservation Areas

ENV 32 - Listed Buildings

ENV 59 - Protection of Trees

7.0 Planning Issues and Discussion

Main Issues

7.0 The main issue to consider are the principal of converting the buildings, the impact of the changes on the heritage asset, the impact on the Conservation Area, the impact on neighbouring land users, impact on the trees within the site, ecology and parking.

Principle

7.1 The site designated as a Community facility under Policy CF 1 of the UDP, owing to his last use by DMBC. Elmfield House was last used by Youth Services and vacated in 2013. The Registrars was vacated May 2017. Doncaster Council deemed the building surplus to requirements for the councils needs with the registrar functions now being hosted by the new Civic Office. The ground work depot which is outside the application site was vacated June 2017. The buildings are regarded as falling within use class (B1) business/office use.

7.2 CF1 states that community facilities will normally be retained for community uses. CF2 states that the loss of community facilities will be resisted where that facility is within an area of deficiency.

7.3 Policy CF 4 requires justification for the loss of such a facility to ensure they are not unnecessarily closed . If they are declared surplus to requirements proposals for their future alternative use will be acceptable where;

- a) No suitable alternative community use could be provided through the reuse of the building,
- b) No other community facilities provider wishes to acquire it for their own community use
- c) It does not lie within an area deficient in community facilities,

7.4 In terms of advertisement this was a public building and an asset of Doncaster Council. Such assets need to obtain the best price possible when being disposed of. Such buildings cannot be gifted to community groups. The listed building status and condition of Elmfield House is also a major consideration in attracting any future new use along with its upkeep. The building was only likely to attract office and residential uses due to the high conversion costs and upkeep requirements.

7.5 In terms of marketing the property was advertised for 2 months with closing date of 29th January 2016 (there was an option for the depot) (tender). 3 offers were received:

- use as offices (successful tender and current owners)
- use house as business centre for start-up business, wanted to demolish the register office for a residential dwelling and depot as café or residential.
- (register office only for use as community training centre and office base for charity

7.6 Officers are therefore content that the building is now surplus to requirement and given it's a council asset there is no requirement to dispose the building to a community group. The building had to be sold on the open market and to the highest tender.

7.7 Given the building was deemed surplus to requirements, the site was sold in order that the building could acquire a new use and attract some much needed investment. It was originally envisaged the building may be used as private offices, however no such application was forthcoming. A building of this stature struggles to remain empty for a lengthy period and it's without doubt conversion costs would be high given the age and condition of the building. The applicants are having current difficulties securing the building and it has suffered several bouts vandalism over recent months. It's therefore imperative that a timely decision is made and that conversion can commence in order that a presence exists on site and the listed building is not further damaged beyond repair.

7.8 The proposal before committee is for a residential use of the site. This originally was a mixture of apartments and a 15 person HMO. This attracted several letters of concern particularly over the transient nature of the likely occupants of such a facility. The applicants tried to dispel this concern and gave examples of the quality of other conversions that they had done in Doncaster and invited members to view these conversions (namely 3 Union Street) to appreciate and understand the level and quality of finish and service proposed.

7.9 The client had identified a need for a high quality serviced HMO facility to provide accommodation for professionals. However in order to expedite the progress of the application the registrar was amended, to remove the HMO element in favour of 8 x1-bed flats. The residential use of the site is an appropriate use and will provide the necessary investment for the conversion to take place.

Impact on surrounding uses and character

7.10 In terms of character, South Parade is prestigious main road running out of the town centre and has a real combination of offices, retail, restaurants, hotels and residential which is typical of a fringe town centre location. The use of this relatively self-contained site is not considered to be harmful to the areas character and may well support other small businesses in the area. The new use will give a permanent onsite presence and help retain what is an iconic part of Doncaster's Heritage. The use is unlikely to impact on the attractiveness of the adjoining park and the removal of the HMO element has not received any further objections to the plans. The proposal due to its self contained nature raises no issues of loss of privacy to surrounding residents. The proposal involves no new build and therefore no scale or massing concerns exist.

Impact on the Listed Building and Conservation Area

7.11 In assessing this proposal it is important to consider what impact the proposed use will have on the character and appearance of the South Parade and Bennetthorpe Conservation Area. The aim is to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area as advocated in National policy, Core Strategy Policy CS 15 and ENV 25 of the UDP.

7.12 This particular area of Doncaster is characterised by Georgian and Victorian properties which form a distinctive part of the townscape on the approach to the town centre. This proposal does not interrupt this character as the building is nestled behind the screen wall, heavily treed and had a relatively intensive former use with a constant flow of cars and pedestrians using the building. The changes proposed to both buildings are relatively minor external works. The works will bring both buildings back to life and bring much needed investment into the site. Through a series of amendments the conservation officer was content with the changes being proposed in that the scheme is considered to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area.

7.13 The accompanying listed building consent deals with the internal and external changes to Elmfield House, however again through a series of carefully worded conditions will ensure the special and architectural interest of the building is preserved in accordance with Core Strategy CS 15 and UDP Policy ENV 32. The proposal is still yet to receive building regulation approval which may mean alterations may be required, however this will have to be assessed once this process is undertaken.

7.14 Finally there is no question that subdividing the building can be destructive of historic fabric and presents many difficulties, however some form of subdivision is always required in order for a new use to be acquired. Offices tend to favour open plan and new residential uses clearly need new partitions. The applicant has worked closely with officers to reduce the number of apartments and make the necessary internal changes to satisfy the conservation officer. The proposal does have some positive in the form of creating a split between the main building and the former coach house and the modern extension.

7.15 In summary the conversion is considered to preserve and enhance the Conservation area and have no detrimental impact on the heritage asset.

Highways Parking.

7.16 With regard to highway safety and parking, this should be considered against policy CS 14 of the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan which states that new development should ensure quality, stability, safety and security of private property, public areas and the highway, permeability and legibility.

7.17 The highway officer commented that much of the parking already exists owing to its former use and the access is satisfactory posing no highway safety concerns. The parking is at least 30 spaces, so 1 per unit and more informal parking could occur to cater for visitors or increased demand. This means parking is unlikely to spill out of the site and aggravate local residents. Whilst one space per unit doesn't strictly comply with the parking standards adopted by Doncaster, given that the units are predominately 1 bedroomed and it is in a town centre location, 1 space in this instance is acceptable. The site is also very sustainable and parking does exist on street within the vicinity if this becomes a concern.

7.18 The access to the site is narrow, however the site would have historically been serviced by a refuse vehicle and two way passing can occur on the verges under the tree canopy. The prospect of widening the access was considered, however no space exists to the south of the access due to the fence and site ownership boundaries. To the north would involve disturbing the root protection areas of several mature trees near the access. Therefore it has been concluded that the access should remain 'as is'. It poses no threat to highway safety and vehicles will continually to informally use the verges if necessary.

Trees

7.19 The site hosts lots of vegetation and a number of key trees of which form- Doncaster Borough Council Tree Preservation Order (No.391) 2017 Elmfield House. The overriding majority were deemed suitable for long-term protection by virtue of their historic association with Elmfield House prior to the setting out of its grounds as a public park in the 1920s. The trees also make a significant contribution to the visual and recreational amenity of this part of Doncaster and are an integral part of the Bennetthorpe Conservation Area, providing significant ecosystem benefits. It is therefore imperative that the scheme causes no harm or loss of these trees in accordance with Paragraph 109 of the NPPF that states 'the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, in regards to: valued landscapes, ecosystem services, and biodiversity'. The spirit of this is also reflected in Core Strategy Policy CS16: Valuing our Natural Environment and ENV 59 Tree Protection.

7.20 The application was originally submitted with no tree survey, however this was later provided along with the necessary shading plans. The applicants also produced a plan showing the car parking spaces overlaid of the Root Protection Plan.

7.21 The tree officer had initial concerns particularly with regards to the layout of the registrar apartments in terms of shading, which will increase the pressure on these trees. This was however addressed by the introduction of sun pipes and roof lights to apartments 5, 6 & 7, which will allow more light to flood these rooms and make them less oppressive in terms of shading. These will need to be kept clean in order to be effective as part of the site maintenance.

7.22 The majority of the parking areas within the site are existing, so there is no concern about the need to create new parking spaces. The concern was that overflow parking could occur under the trees however a planning condition suggesting the introduction of a knee rail under tree canopies is suggested to preclude this occurring.

7.23 Overall the initial tree concerns have been satisfactorily negotiated away, which should ensure the new residential use does not create increased pressure to prune and remove protected trees. Suitable tree protection conditions are added to cover the conversion and future protection of the trees from car parking. Also sufficient protection is afforded to the trees by the Tree Preservation Order to ensure their retention from future pruning and removal due to the residential use.

Layout/apartment size

7.24 The initial scheme proposed 24 apartments in Elmfield House. This was intensive and had a number of inner rooms with no outlook. These were inadequate for fire regulation, had poor outlook and no natural ventilation. Some of the rooms were also substandard in terms of size and layout with no storage. The scheme also lacked bin stores. The layout was changed on a number of occasions to overcome these concerns which now results in the final plans for 22 flats which are a combination 4 2– bed unit and 18 1-bed units.

7.25 The environmental health officer was content with the layout as was the design officer [who](#) commented that whilst many of the flats are a metre or few short of the standards they do now all have decent outlook and storage space, the sizes are constrained to a degree by the historic fabric so on balance this is acceptable. Many of the bathrooms and kitchens are located internally without windows so these will need adequate ventilation so as not to cause problems. Overall this will make good the historic building and allow its continued use.

7.26 With regards to the Registrar, this building was originally submitted to be used as a 15 person House in Multiple Occupation (HIMO). This was amended in favour of its conversion to 8 x1-bed flats. Again the design and internal arrangement of the flats needed amendment to ensure the living conditions of the future residents was acceptable in terms of apartment size and outlook and the amended plans finally achieved a satisfactory scheme.

7.27 The final scheme will have to comply with Building Regulation requirements in terms of fire risk, escape windows, noise insulation and will be inspected once complete with regard to the Housing Act requirements.

Viability and contributions

7.28 The final consideration is viability and contributions. Given this scheme proposes less than x10 2-bed family units, no contributions are required towards public open space or education as the triggers are not met.

7.29 Under normal circumstances the creation of 30 apartments under policy CS 12 would require contributions to affordable housing (trigger more than x15 units at 26%). The amount of contributions is often deliberated and assessed through the production of viability reports and in some circumstances claw back agreements can be put in place if the market is uncertain. However this case is unique in that the buildings could have ordinarily been converted to residential use under Class O (Conversion of B1 offices and registrar to residential) through a prior approval and no contributions would have been made, as only certain limitations are considered.

7.30 However the listed status of Elmfield House and the fact that the registrar lies within the curtilage of a Listed Building means that class O cannot apply and full planning permission is needed. Therefore technically it would be susceptible to such contributions but only due to its listed status. The key planning aim is to find a suitable new use for the building, whilst ensuring the conversion respects the listed status. The amended plans have successfully achieved this. The applicants have submitted a viability report to exemplify this issue. Whilst the report has not been independently assessed it does show that the combination of the purchase price £580,000 and the conversion costs results in a profit margin of 4.2% GDV which is considerably lower than a typical developer (15%).

7.31 The viability report is logical and the principal aim is getting the listed building back into use and preserving its key features as it is current susceptible to vandalism and erosion. On this basis in order to ensure a deliverable scheme in a timely manner no commuted sum is deemed necessary.

7.32 Also the conversion of Elmfield house could have been reduced from the current 22 predominantly 1 bed units to 14 units (mixture of 1-2 bed). This would have been under the affordable housing, POS and education (providing no more than 9 were 2-bed) and the Registrar left as a HIMO. However in order to appease concern the HIMO was altered to flats which increased the number of flats, therefore this therefore supports the case further for no contributions.

8.0 Summary and Conclusion

8.1 The proposal is felt to be acceptable as the proposal would bring a vacant listed building back into use. The use will not cause significant harm to neighbouring uses, and will provide a sustainable town centre fringe residential complex. The proposal would cause no significant impact on the protected trees within the site and no significant harm to the heritage asset. The proposal is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the relevant planning policies.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 GRANT Full planning permission subject to the following conditions.

01. STAT1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
REASON
Condition required to be imposed by Section 91(as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. ACC3 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the details shown on the amended plans referenced and dated as follows:

Registrar

Proposed floor plan - Rev D 27.4.18

Proposed elevations - Rev B 27.4.18

Elmfield

Ground floor existing Rev A 16.4.18

First floor existing Drwg 003

Second floor existing Drwg 004

Existing elevations Rev B 24.4.18

Proposed ground and first floor Rev H 3.5.18

Proposed attic and cellar Rev F 9.5.18

Proposed elevations Rev F 15.5.18

Site Plan Rev C 30.4.18

REASON

To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application as approved.

03. CON2 Should any unexpected significant contamination be encountered during development, all associated works shall cease and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) be notified in writing immediately. A Phase 3 remediation and Phase 4 verification report shall be submitted to the LPA for approval. The associated works shall not re-commence until the reports have been approved by the LPA.

REASON

To secure the satisfactory development of the site in terms of human health and the wider environment and pursuant to guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

04. The development hereby granted shall not commence until a scheme for the protection of all retained trees that complies with British Standard 5837: 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and construction shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The Tree protection scheme shall be implemented on site before any equipment, machinery or materials have been brought on to site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority.
REASON
To ensure that retained trees are protected from damage during construction.
05. The alignment of all service trenches and overhead services shall be approved by the Local Planning authority prior to the commencement of development
REASON
To prevent damage being caused to trees which it has been agreed shall be retained.
06. No development or other operations shall commence on site in connection with the development hereby approved (including tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, access formation or alteration, or any operations involving the use of construction machinery) until a detailed Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the approved Method Statement. The Method Statement shall include full detail of the following:
- o Installation of a tree protection scheme
 - o Treatment of the access points in to the site
 - o Siting of materials storage areas, parking areas and site cabins
- REASON
To prevent damage to trees shown for retention on the Approved Plan

The above objections, considerations and resulting recommendation have had regard to Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998. The recommendation will not interfere with the applicant's and/or objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

Appendix 1- site plan



Appendix 2 – Existing elevations



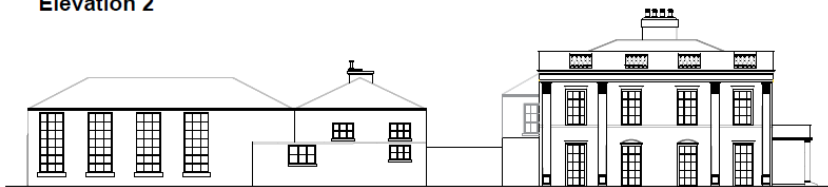
Elevation 4



Elevation 3



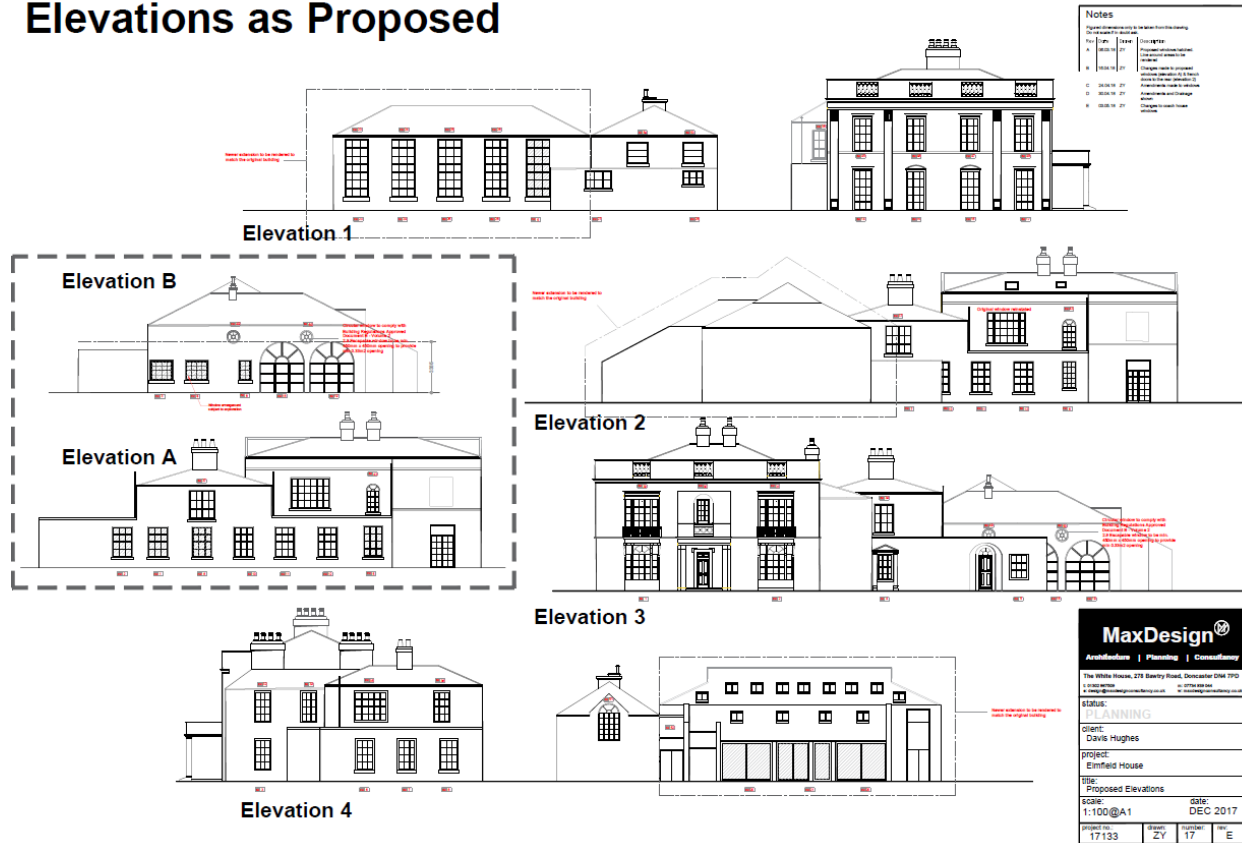
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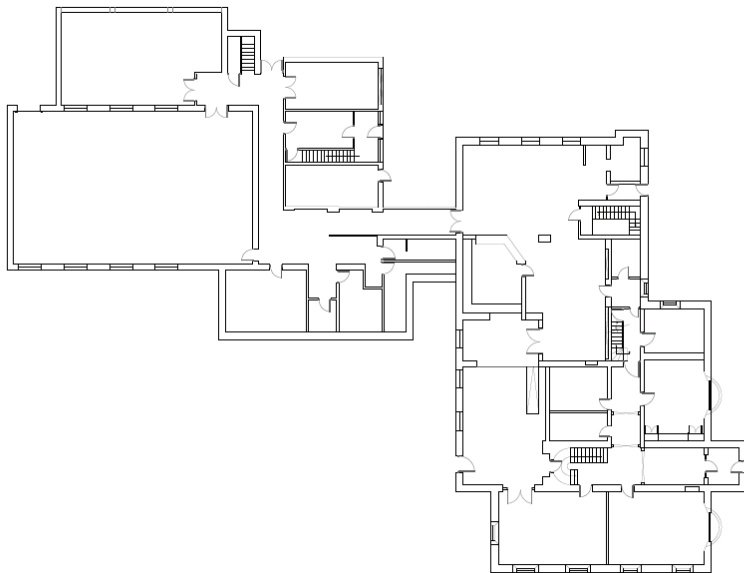
Elevation 1

Appendix 3 - Proposed elevations

Elevations as Proposed



Appendix 4 – Existing floor plans.

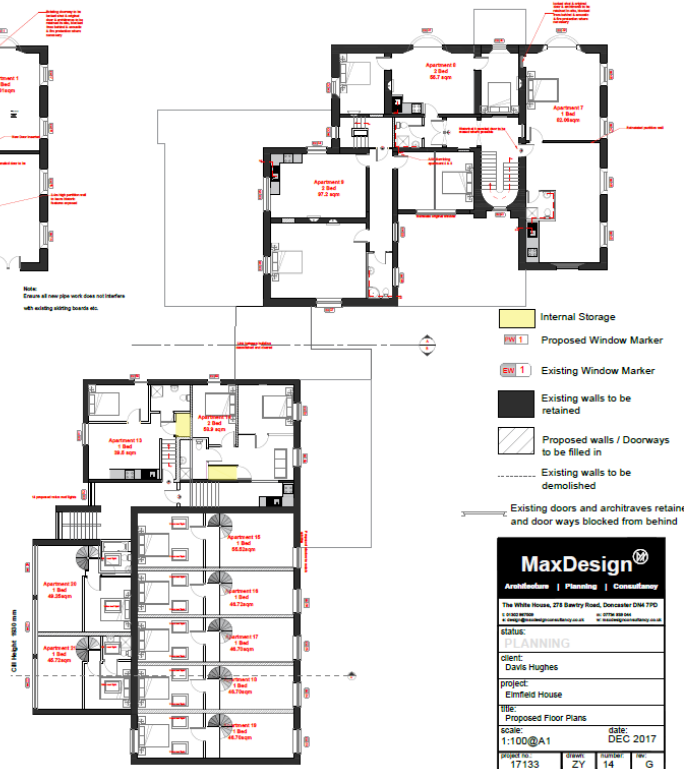


Appendix 5 – Proposed floor plans.

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



Notes	
1	1:100
2	1:100
3	1:100
4	1:100
5	1:100
6	1:100
7	1:100
8	1:100
9	1:100
10	1:100
11	1:100
12	1:100
13	1:100
14	1:100
15	1:100
16	1:100
17	1:100
18	1:100

- Internal Storage
- Proposed Window Marker
- Existing Window Marker
- Existing walls to be retained
- Proposed walls / Doorways to be filled in
- Existing walls to be demolished
- Existing doors and architraves retain and door ways blocked from behind

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info@maxdesign.co.uk	
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PLANNING	
client:	Davis Hughes
project:	Emfield House
title:	Proposed Floor Plans
scale:	1:100@A1
date:	DEC 2017
project no:	17133
sheet:	ZY
of:	14
rev:	G