

# DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PLANNING COMMITTEE - 3rd April 2018

Application	7
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Application Number:	17/02892/FUL	Application Expiry Date:	17th January 2018
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Application Type:	Full Application
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Proposal Description:	Change of use from offices to a seven bedroom house in multiple occupation and seven flats
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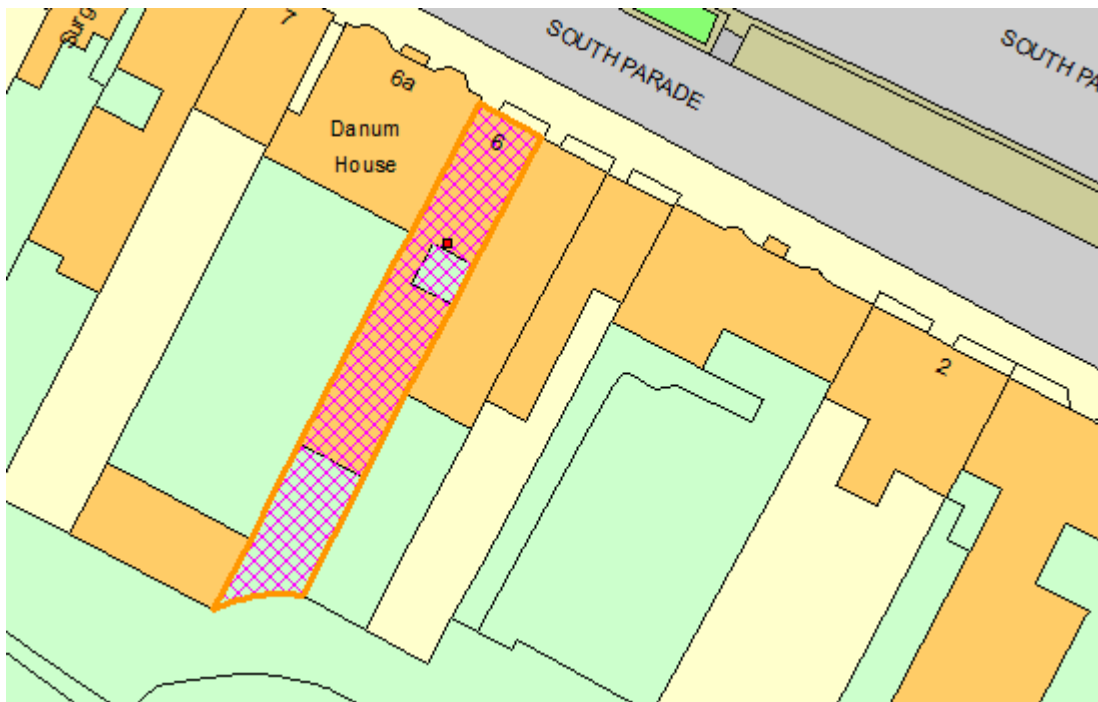
At:	6 South Parade Doncaster DN1 2DY
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For:	Mr R Bhatt - Indigo Property Associates Ltd
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Third Party Reps:	13	Parish:	
		Ward:	Town

Author of Report	Elizabeth Maw
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MAIN RECOMMENDATION:	GRANT
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## **1.0 Reason for Report**

1.1 The application is being presented to committee due to the significant public interest shown in the application.

## **2.0 Proposal and Background**

2.1 The application site is 6 South Parade. It is a mid-terrace property over 6 floors. The property has a historic commercial use but it has been empty for two years, with the exception of a small business in the rear extension. The rest of the property has been vacant since an accountancy left at the end of 2015. This proposal seeks an alternative use for residential.

2.2 The residential proposal is to create a seven bedroom house in multiple occupation (HMO) on the lower ground floor and seven individual flats on the upper floors.

2.3 The property is Grade II listed and within the Doncaster - South Parade Conservation Area. The UDP land allocation is Office Policy Area.

2.4 Thirteen objections have been received.

## **3.0 Relevant Planning History**

3.1 Planning history relevant to the consideration of the application includes:

17/02893/LBC: Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations in connection with a conversion to a residential use. Pending consideration.

## **4.0 Representations**

4.1 The application has been publicised by letters to the neighbouring properties, site notice and press advert.

4.2 Thirteen objections have been received. The objectors are local businesses. The reasons for objecting are impact on the character of the area and the implications of a high density scheme. The comments are summarised underneath:

4.3 The character is business and office use with established professional enterprises including finance, law, engineering, design, medical, consulting etc. These businesses form a solid professional hub. They bring wealth and offer services to Doncaster residents. It is important this area continues to attract new professional enterprises and not encourage the businesses already here to leave.

4.4 The listed status of the buildings is unique in the town centre and has kept the area attractive. Everyone is likely to describe their neighbourhood as special and different but South Parade is truly unique in Doncaster.

4.5 The conversion of no6 to a residential use could start a change of character to the area. Developers could look to change other properties in Bennethorpe, Albion Terrace and Regent Square to residential use, to increase their value.

4.6 Objectors are aware of policy to create new housing but they consider South Parade should be protected for business use. There is appropriate space elsewhere in the town centre to provide the type of housing that is being applied for.

4.7 The density is excessive and could lead to social problems and a detrimental impact to the character of the conservation area. The use could increase noise, litter, crime and anti social behaviour.

4.8 The density should be reduced so that every unit would be a self contained apartment with adequate size and quality. A neighbouring business owner would support 4 or 5 larger flats to fit in with the affluence of the area but the density of this proposed scheme would attract low income individuals or people on benefits.

4.9 The change of use would make parking impossible for the businesses that are in the street, and importantly any visitors coming to see them. Parking is of high importance to the businesses and not having the ability for visitors to park close by could cause businesses to relocate.

## **5.0 Relevant Consultations**

5.1 Environmental Health: No objections, subject to a soundproofing scheme.

5.2 Design and Conservation Officer Initial Comments: Due to the present condition and vacancy the building is considered vulnerable. Whilst the building seems to be able to converted without much impact on the historic fabric the actual use is likely to have a detrimental impact on the character of the area which is the most prestigious street in Doncaster Town Centre. Fewer apartments within the main building and the use of the rear for further apartments rather than as a HiMO is preferred.

## **6.0 Relevant Policy and Strategic Context**

Planning policy relevant to the consideration of this application includes:

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 6: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Doncaster Council's Core Strategy:

CS1: Quality of Life

CS2: Growth and Regeneration Strategy

CS14: Design and Sustainable Construction

CS15: Valuing our Historic Environment

Saved Doncaster Unitary Development Plan:

ENV32: Listed Buildings

ENV25: Conservation Areas

TC11: Office Policy Area

## 7.0 Planning Issues and Discussion

### Principle

7.1 A residential use is acceptable in principle. The proposed housing is aimed at a specific type of individual, which are persons who are working in the area on a short term basis. The residents would live on one of the most prestigious streets in Doncaster and benefit from town centre amenities on their doorstep. The NPPF advises local authorities to provide a range of housing in areas where it is demanded. This proposal achieves the aims of the NPPF.

7.2 Properties along South Parade are predominantly in commercial use/ offices and the area has a commercial character to it. The UDP land allocation is Office Policy Area. Policy TC11 of the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan advises that non-office proposals will be "treated on their merits having regard to highway safety and the relationship of the site to surrounding uses, providing that they are consistent with other policies in the plan, particularly shopping and conservation".

7.3 Preference would be to re-use the building for an office or business use but a residential use is equally acceptable. Residential uses are not out of character on South Parade. In 2015 a planning application was granted for 15 flats at South Parade. No8 South Parade has been converted into 9 flats.

7.4 Barnsdales are the estate agents for the property. They have provided a letter detailing the property's background, marketing and interest. In summary, the property has been subject to a comprehensive marketing campaign for commercial use for 3 ½ years but with little interest for a commercial use. The only serious interest has been for a residential use.

7.5 Paragraph 22 of the NPPF states Planning Authorities should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. A comprehensive marketing campaign for office use has been undertaken and it was unsuccessful so the council has to consider alternative uses having regard to market signals. The marketing campaign demonstrates only residential is a viable future use.

### Density

7.6 Objectors are concerned this high density scheme could lead to social problems and a detrimental impact to the character of the conservation area. The use could impact upon parking, increase noise, litter, crime and anti-social behaviour.

7.7 The owner was asked if he would consider reducing the density. The owner has declined because large and luxury apartments are not suitable to his business. The applicant is a London based property developer with a portfolio of properties around the country. His property model is corporate lets rather than individuals. The owner works closely with local established businesses to provide high quality accommodation for their staff as their permanent home. These types of lets only need small but good quality living spaces for the short time that the tenants live there.

7.8 The Design and Conservation Officer advises the building can be converted without much impact on the historic fabric. The Conservation Officer initial comments stated he would prefer fewer apartments within the main building and the use of the rear for further apartments rather than as a HiMO. However, now that the Conservation Officer is aware of the applicants business model and the type of lets, he does not raise any objections to the density.

#### Impact upon Surrounding Uses and Buildings

7.9 Given the listed status of the building, the designation in the South Parade Conservation Area and the close proximity to the town centre, there is a potential to create a high quality residential unit. The owner intends to invest a significant amount of money converting the premises to a good quality finish.

7.10 Objectors have concerns that a high density scheme could impact on the conservation area. Potential problems could be litter, noise and anti-social behaviour. If the development does cause issues there is a potential to see a decline in the street and make these listed buildings more vulnerable in the long term. The applicant was asked to demonstrate how he will ensure these problems will not happen.

7.11 The applicant is a London based property developer with a portfolio of properties around the country. His property model is corporate lets rather than individuals. As a company they do not discriminate on tenant selection but their business model is based on lets to working professionals rather than DSS or low income tenants. The applicant considers himself to be a responsible landlord; he has undertaken a range of property training and he is a member of the National Landlord Association. Although the applicant lives in London he does not consider that this will undermine the management of the property. The applicant will use a local agent to manage the property and they will be responsible for vetting tenants and dealing with day to day issues.

7.12 The owner has discussed the business model with the local authority and shown evidence of other conversions he has carried out elsewhere in the country, which appear to be good quality conversions. The applicant also said he considered Doncaster to have a high stock of poor HMO and small flats. So he saw a gap in the housing market for better quality living spaces, to cater for working professionals that need good quality, affordable and a short term property in the Doncaster area.

7.13 Assuming the property is occupied by working individuals, most residents will be at work when the nearby businesses are operational. Therefore, there is no reason why the nearby businesses and this residential use cannot be compatible neighbours.

7.14 Bin storage is at the rear of the property. The internal arrangement allows easy access to the bin storage.

7.15 The property benefits from two external courtyards but accessed internally, which can be used as a small amenity space or smoking space for residents.

## Residential Standards

7.16 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF states planning should "ensure a good standard of amenity for...future occupants". It is concluded that future occupants will have a good standard of amenity and comply with the NPPF.

7.17 The house in multiple occupation will be licensed by the DMBC Private Sector Housing Team. This team has checked the application and confirms the layout is suitable for licensing as it has adequate sized bedrooms, ventilation, kitchens and sufficient washing facilities. The accommodation within the HMO is basic but this is characteristic of a HMO.

7.16 The proposed seven flats will be on the upper floors. On the upper floors are two large rooms either side of a central staircase and each flat will take up one of these rooms. Each room is bright and spacious and has a pleasant outlook. Their size is an average of about 22m<sup>2</sup>.

7.18 Nationally described space standards recommend a studio flat to be 32m<sup>2</sup> but these standards are advisory only. They have not been adopted or viability tested by the Local Planning Authority. The proposed flats are below the national space standard but the number and size of the proposed flats is partly dictated by the layout of the building and to fit in with the business model of the applicant, which is flats for working tenants who are working in the area on a short term basis.

## Design and Conservation

7.19 The NPPF (section 12) and Policies CS15 of the Core Strategy and UDP policies ENV25 and ENV32 seek to ensure that our historic environment is retained for future generations and the wider visual and historic context is respected.

7.20 This conservation area is characterised by Georgian and Victorian properties fronting the linear Great North Road usually of three storeys in terraced form. This parade of buildings forms a coherent group of historic buildings and is a distinctive part of the townscape on the approach to the town centre. The heritage value of these terraces is indicated by the fact that virtually all the properties are listed in their own right with No.6 being Grade II listed.

7.20 The Design and Conservation Officer considers the building to be vulnerable due to its vacancy and condition. It does appear that the traditional office use for the historic buildings of the area is declining in attractiveness and where such uses remain there is pressure for more open plan spaces and increased signage.

7.21 The Design and Conservation Officer advises the building seems to be able to converted without much impact on the historic fabric and any necessary alterations will be considered by a listed building consent. There are no external alterations being considered by this planning application.

## Highways and Parking

7.22 The property has 2-4 tandem parking spaces at the back. Any additional car owners will have to use car parks or street parking where it is permitted, safe and available. This is a town centre area and it is normal for a property to have limited off street parking.

7.23 Objectors are concerned the change of use will increase the demand for parking on South Parade. Parking on South Parade is open to the public but restricted to a maximum two hours during business hours. Residents will be drawn to the private parking at the rear because of restricted parking at the front, which will retain the parking for visitors of nearby businesses. In addition, parking would be more in demand at night and weekends when residents are at home and businesses are less in use.

## **8.0 Summary and Conclusion**

8.1 This Grade II listed building has been empty for over 2 years and is considered vulnerable. A marketing campaign demonstrates the property is no longer viable for commercial use so an alternative use should be considered. A high density residential use is proposed, which is appropriate for short term town centre living and it would suit the owners business model. On the evidence available, the occupation of the property would not cause harm to surrounding businesses or result in a change of character to the conservation area. The recommendation is to approve.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

9.1 GRANT Full planning permission subject to the conditions below:

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. ACC1            The development hereby permitted must be carried out and completed entirely in accordance with the terms of this permission and the details shown on the approved plans and specifications.  
REASON  
To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application as approved.
  
03. U59073           Prior to commencement of the development, a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, to install soundproofing to the HMO party walls/floors/ceilings separating individual bedsit rooms from all adjoining bedsit rooms, all adjoining communal areas and the apartment above, and between the communal kitchen and apartment above.

Such soundproofing shall be to a specification that meets or exceeds the appropriate standards of airborne and impact sound insulation (also considering flanking transmission), as specified in the Building Regulations Approved Document E, and all approved works shall be undertaken prior to first occupation of the premises.

REASON

To ensure satisfactory internal standards. The scheme has to be agreed pre commencement as the building is Grade II listed.

04. U59201 Details of the positions, design, materials, height, and type of boundary treatment to be erected on site, including any gates shall be submitted to and approved in writing before installation. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority, the details as approved shall be completed before the occupation of any buildings on site.

REASON

To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development.

05. U59202 Before the development is brought into use a bin storage area shall be provided at the rear of the property and details of any works to accommodate a bin storage area shall be submitted to and approved in writing before these works commence. The bin storage area shall be a size that is sufficient to store waste generated by residents and provision for recycling.

REASON

To ensure that adequate provision is made for the disposal of waste in the interests of the amenity of the area.

06. U59912 Prior to commencement of relevant site works, schedule of works to windows shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and works carried out in full accordance with this approval. This shall include the restoration of windows of historic interest on the frontage of the property, and any replacement of non-historic windows particular those to the rear of the main building (which shall be in timber).

REASON

To protect the special interest of the Listed Building and to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area

07. U59913 Prior to commencement of relevant site works, details of any new rooflights shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Rooflights shall be of a conservation type with minimal frames visible externally with vertical division. Works shall be carried out in full accordance with this approval

REASON

To protect the special interest of the Listed Building and to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area



08. U59914

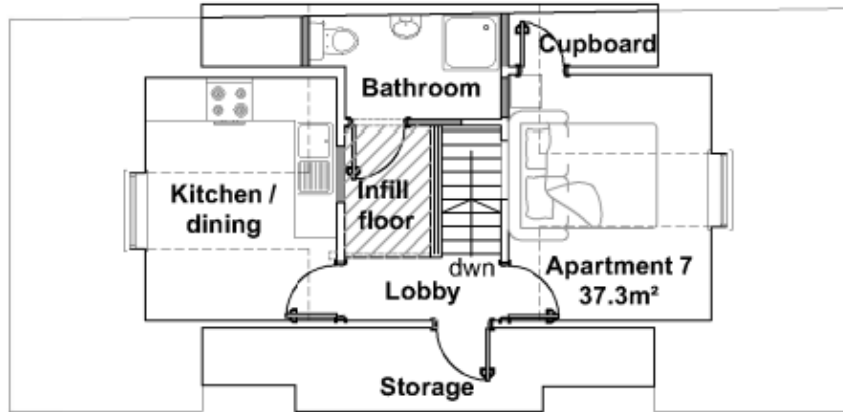
The relevant site works shall not take place until full details of the proposed design, size, location, materials and colour of all flues and vents (including any heating and plumbing vents, meter boxes, and air extract vents) required for the conversion of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Works shall be carried out in full accordance with this approval

**REASON**

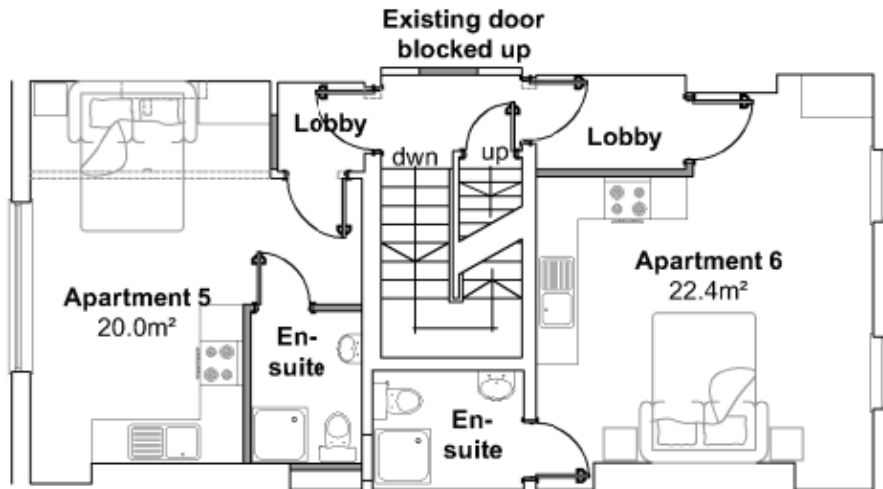
To protect the special interest of the Listed Building and to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area

**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.**

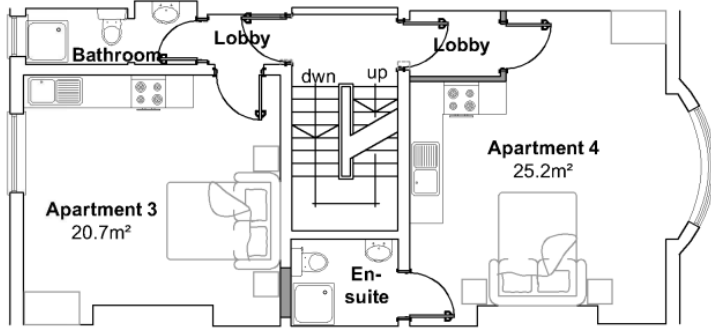
Appendix 1: Proposed floor plans



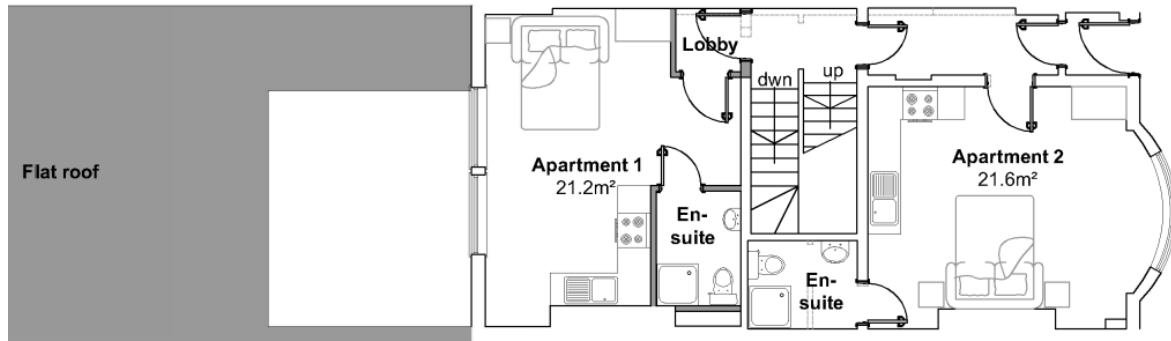
**PROPOSED ATTIC LAYOUT**  
Scale 1:100 @ A1



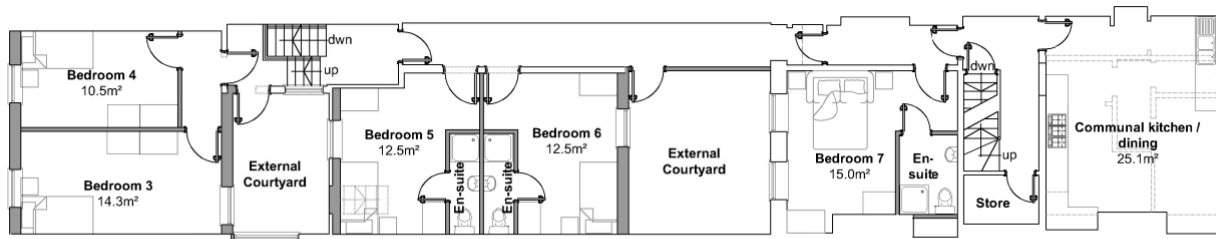
**PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR LAYOUT**  
Scale 1:100 @ A1



**PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR LAYOUT**  
Scale 1:100 @ A1

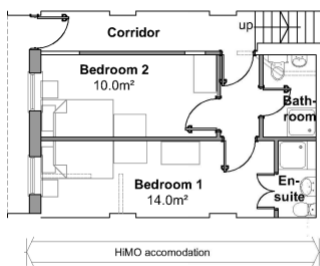


**PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR LAYOUT**



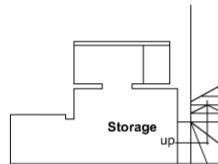
HIMO accommodation

**PROPOSED LOWER GROUND FLOOR LAYOUT**  
Scale 1:100 @ A1



HIMO accommodation

**PROPOSED BASEMENT LAYOUT**  
Scale 1:100 @ A1



**PROPOSED BASEMENT LAYOUT**  
Scale 1:100 @ A1