
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2025

by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F4410/W/25/3365767

1 Church Street, Conisbrough, Doncaster DN12 3HL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by A Haycock (A-Rock Investments Ltd) against the decision of City of Doncaster Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01654/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the change of use to 12 bed/15 person HMO and rear extension at lower and ground floor level.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use to a 12 bed/15 person HMO at 1 Church Street, Conisbrough, Doncaster DN12 3HL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/01654/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development on the application form does not include reference to the proposed rear extension shown on the plans submitted. Whilst the appeal form states that the description has not changed, the description used in the appellant's Statement of Case (and that which appears on the decision notice) includes reference to the extension. As this more accurately describes what is proposed and it is clear that this is development that the Council considered, I have used the amended description in the banner header above and the formal decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of nearby residents, with reference to community cohesion and the fear of crime.

Reasons

4. Policy 9 of the Doncaster Local Plan 2021 (LP) sets out the criteria that proposals for Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) should meet. The reason for refusal does not refer to there being a failure to accord with this policy. Instead, it makes reference to Policy 47 of the LP which refers to the creation of safe and secure places. However the criteria in that policy refer primarily to the specific design of developments, and it is not clear which criterion or criteria it is considered that the appeal proposal would not meet.
5. Reference is made by both the Council and South Yorkshire Police to the presence of another HMO near to the appeal property. The Council refers to there

being 45 records of anti-social behaviour within a 200 metre radius of the appeal site, which includes that HMO, during the period April 2024 to April 2025. Whilst they consider this to be a high number, there is no comparator provided to demonstrate that this is indeed a high number in a town centre location. Nor are there any details of what proportion of these records are associated with the other HMO.

6. The Police do confirm there have been a number of incidents occurring at the other HMO and they point to the resultant resourcing that is needed to deal with these. They raise concern that an additional HMO located in close proximity could lead to a further drain on these finite resources. It is not explained however how the proximity is relevant to the concern about resourcing that is raised, and indeed as noted above the LP sets out planning policy requirements in terms of proximity and concentration.
7. The basis of the reason for refusal is therefore grounded in the experience of one other HMO. It is not clear whether this is the only HMO in Conisbrough or whether there are other HMOs which have not given rise to the issues identified. But whatever is the case, the LP does not preclude the provision of HMOs as a matter of principle and, there is no substantive evidence provided to suggest that HMOs as a planning use lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour and crime, or more specifically that the appeal proposal would.
8. In conclusion, I do not find a conflict with any of the criteria set out in Policy 47 of the LP. It is not suggested by the Council that there is a conflict with Policy 9 of the LP, which is the development plan policy which refers directly to HMOs. The proposal therefore accords with the relevant policies of the development plan. A convincing argument has not been made with respect to anti-social behaviour and crime. Nor do I consider there to be any compelling evidence that the proposal would undermine community cohesion. Therefore, I find that there would not be harm to the living conditions of nearby residents from the proposal in terms of community cohesion and the fear of crime.

Other Matters

9. The appeal property is located close to a number of residential properties. However, it is within a town centre where a significant amount of activity takes place, including vehicle movements and the movement of people to and from properties. Furthermore, the built form of the appeal property, and in particular its substantial existing rear projection and the absence of openings facing towards the properties on Castle Street, would substantially limit the impact of any noise generated, including during construction. Other residential properties are located further away with a reasonable degree of separation. In this context, the proposal would not result in harm to the living conditions of nearby residents in any other respect.
10. The Council advise that proposed room sizes and amenity provisions would appear to comply with minimum HMO standards and that an HMO license would be required. Therefore, I am satisfied that the spaces proposed to be provided would be adequate to serve the needs of the future occupiers. They also raise no objection to the loss of the ground floor retail unit. Policy 23 of the LP allows for non-town centre uses where it can be demonstrated that they will not negatively impact upon the vitality and viability of the town centre, with particular regard to the

amenity of existing business and residents. Given the Council's position on the loss of the unit and because of its location on the very edge of the town centre, I am satisfied that the proposal would not conflict with the aims of Policy 23.

11. Reference is made by interested parties to a lack of facilities including doctors and dentists, however the appeal site is located within a town centre which, in planning policy terms, is a strategically preferable location for developments that provide housing. The appeal property is located in a sustainable town centre location close to services and facilities and to public transport including the train station. There was no objection from the Highway Authority to the proposal in terms of there being no parking provision, as a result of any increase in traffic or in general highway safety terms. Therefore, I find that there would be no harm arising from the appeal development in those respects.
12. The appeal site is close to the Grade I listed St Peter's Church and within the Conisbrough Conservation Area (CA). However, the external changes proposed to the front elevation find no objection from the Council's Design and Conservation Officer. They make no suggestion that these minor external changes would cause harm to the setting of the church, to the character and appearance of the CA or to Conisbrough Castle, which is further away. I find no reason to take a different view on these matters. There is no substantive evidence that the proposal would generate levels of noise that would materially extend beyond noise which might be expected to be found in a town centre. Therefore, I find that there would be no harm to the setting of the church or to the character of the CA in that respect either.
13. It is suggested that there is no need for the development, but no evidence pertaining to this has been provided and, as I have outlined, the proposal is in accordance with the development plan. Likewise, there is nothing substantive to suggest that the proposal would lead to a decrease in demand for properties in the area, would adversely impact on future investment in the area or reduce its appeal for families, or that it would adversely impact upon tourism.

Conditions

14. Conditions relating to the time period to commence development and setting out the approved plans are needed to provide certainty. Conditions limiting the number of tenants/residents and the occupancy levels of the rooms should be imposed to define the permission on the basis of what is applied for.
15. Given the location in a CA and that external changes would be made to the building, conditions requiring further details of those changes, specifications of the new windows and details of materials for rainwater goods and any additional flues and vents should be imposed to safeguard the character and appearance of the CA. Details of any boundary treatments are required for the same reason. The plans submitted show that the existing roof coverings would be retained, and therefore it is not necessary to impose a condition relating to replacement roof material.
16. In accordance with the recommendation from South Yorkshire Archaeology Service a condition requiring a written statement of investigation is reasonable and necessary. Conditions should also be imposed requiring that the bin and cycle storage shown on the submitted plans are provided, to ensure that these provisions are put in place.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be allowed.

Graham Wraight

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan, Proposed Floor Plans Rev B, Proposed Elevations Rev C.
- 3) The maximum number of tenants/residents to be housed at the property shall be no greater than 15.
- 4) All HMO bedrooms hereby approved shall be single occupancy only, except for bedrooms 1, 5 and 6 on the approved plan Proposed Floor Plans Rev B which may be double-occupancy.
- 5) Prior to commencement of the approved external alterations a Method Statement, outlining how those external alterations will be undertaken, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details included within the statement shall include details of:
 - The replacement of the current shopfront with a door and window on the ground floor of the frontage. Details shall include details of the heads which shall match those existing heads elsewhere on the frontage.
 - The lengthening of the first-floor windows.
 - Repairs to existing and areas of new render. Render to match the existing in terms of colour, finish and texture unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - New openings and alterations to existing openings to the rear with details of making good and samples of any additional material required to be agreed.
 - Extension to and rebuilding of rear extension. Stonework and brickwork to match existing in terms of coursing/bonding and samples of any additional material required to be agreed. Details to include the replication of first floor window opening detail.

The statement shall include timescales for works. Development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

- 6) Prior to commencement of works relating to new and/or replacement windows, full details including the design, construction and finish of those windows, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, the details shall include an elevation at 1:20 scale of each door or window type and 1:5 scale cross-

sections. All new/replacement windows shall be fully working sash windows unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

- 7) Prior to commencement of works relating to new/and or replacement rainwater goods, details of those rainwater goods shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.
- 8) Prior to commencement of works relating to any additional flues and vents, full details of the proposed design, size, location, materials and colour of those 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. Development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.
- 9) Prior to commencement of works relating to any alteration to existing boundary treatment and/or any additional boundary treatment to be erected on the site, details of the boundary treatment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include a plan indicating the positions, design, materials, height, and type of boundary treatment including any gates. Development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.
- 10) No development relating to the approved rear extension, including any demolition and groundworks, shall take place until the applicant, or their agent or successor in title, has submitted a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that sets out a strategy for archaeological investigation and this has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The WSI shall include:
 - The programme and method of site investigation and recording.
 - The requirement to seek preservation *in situ* of identified features of importance.
 - The programme for post-investigation assessment.
 - The provision to be made for analysis and reporting.
 - The provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the results.
 - The provision to be made for deposition of the archive created.
 - Nomination of a competent person/persons or organisation to undertake the works.
 - The timetable for completion of all site investigation and post-investigation works.

Thereafter the development shall only take place in accordance with the approved WSI and the development shall not be brought into use until the Local Planning Authority has confirmed in writing that the requirements of the WSI have been fulfilled or alternative timescales agreed.

- 11) Prior to the first occupation of the rooms hereby approved, the bin storage (including provision for storing separate waste for recycling) detailed on the approved plans shall be provided. Any waste bins associated with the development shall be stored within this area unless moved for collection.
- 12) Prior to the first occupation of the rooms hereby approved, the bicycle storage detailed on the approved plans shall be provided and thereafter retained for the lifetime of the development.

-----End of Conditions-----