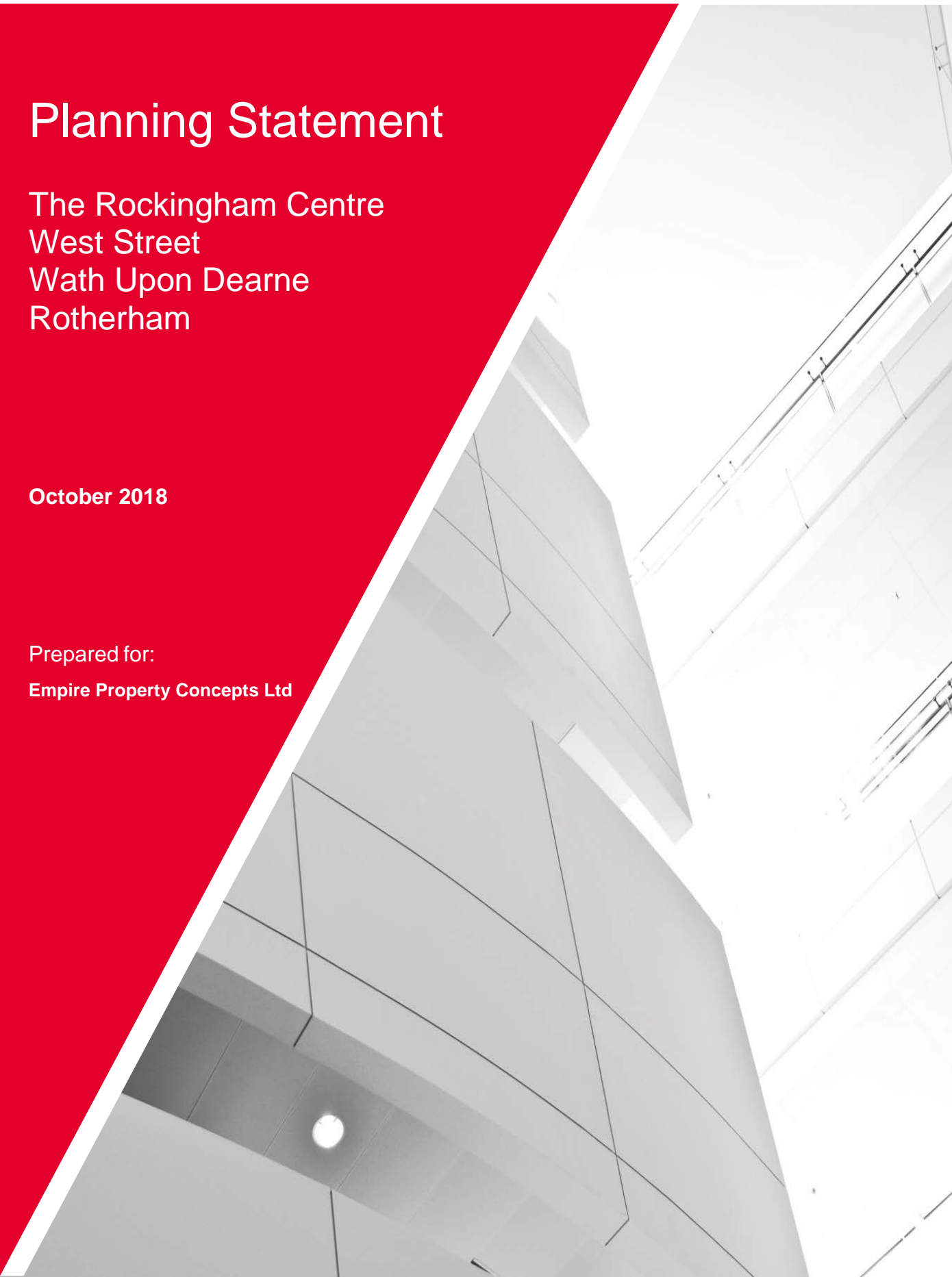


Planning Statement

The Rockingham Centre
West Street
Wath Upon Dearne
Rotherham

October 2018

Prepared for:
Empire Property Concepts Ltd



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Version	Prepared by	Approved by	Date
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1 Introduction

1.1 Cushman & Wakefield has been instructed by Empire Property Concepts Ltd to prepare a Planning Statement to accompany a planning application for change of use of The Rockingham Centre, Wath-upon-Deerne from educational use (use class D1) to 28 residential apartments (use class C3). This Planning Statement will consider the planning context for the site (including the planning policy context and will provide analysis of the development proposals.

1.2 Accordingly, this report is structured as follows:

- Site and Surroundings (including planning history): Section 2;
- Pre-Application Advice: Section 3;
- Development Proposals: Section 4;
- Review of Planning Policy: Section 5;
- Analysis: Section 6, and;
- Summary: Section 7.

2 Site and Surroundings

The Rockingham Centre

- 2.1 The site comprises The Rockingham Centre and associated small parking area (see figure 1 below). The Rockingham Centre is situated adjacent to the town centre of Wath-upon-Dearne. The Rockingham Centre is a three-storey building. The site slopes upwards to the south and therefore one of the storeys of the Centre is at lower ground level. The Centre was constructed in 1974 and has been used for educational and training purposes and was most recently occupied by Dearne Valley College. The College has identified The Rockingham Centre as surplus to requirements. The Centre is currently vacant.
- 2.2 Vehicular access to The Rockingham Centre is via West Street. The Rockingham Centre is connected to the neighbouring building (Montgomery Hall) which is a community facility.
- 2.3 The Rockingham Centre is not within a flood risk area¹. The Centre is within Wath Conservation Area.



Figure 1: Site Location (google maps 2018)

Surrounding Area

- 2.4 The Rockingham Centre is adjacent to Wath-upon-Dearne town centre. To the north of the site is Biscay Way (B6097) with Tesco Extra (and petrol station) beyond. To the south is Montgomery Hall (a community hall) and associated car park. To the west is a landscaped area with the Town Hall

¹ As defined on the Environment Agency map.

(Grade II listed²) and All Saints Church (Grade I listed³) beyond. To the east are various small businesses with the public transport interchange beyond (on Montgomery Road).

2.5 The site is in a highly sustainable location. The public transport interchange is located approximately 119 metres to the east of the site. The following amenities are within walking distance of the site:

Facility	Location	Distance
Montgomery Hall, Community Facility	Church Street	Adjacent to the southern elevation of the Rockingham Centre
Tesco Extra – Supermarket	West Street	180 metres
Wath-on-Dearne, Community Library	Montgomery Road	155 metres
McColls Newsagent	Church Street	123 metres
All Saints Church	Church Street	190 metres
Post Office	Main Road/High Street	313 metres
Wath C of E Primary School	Barnsley Road	470 metres
Our Lady & St Joseph’s RC Primary School	Fitzwilliam Street	315 metres
Wath Comprehensive School	Sandygate	950 metres

Table 1: Local amenities by distance to the site

Planning History

2.6 A search of the online planning records at Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) have been undertaken. The relevant records for the site are provided below:

- Application Ref: RB2000/1286 – erection of new steps and entrance lobby/canopy and construction of new vehicular access. Granted conditionally on the 8th February 2001.
- Application Ref: RB2010/0706 – installation of replacement windows and external cladding. Granted conditionally on the 13th June 2010.

2.7 It is considered that the previous planning history does not have any bearing on the submitted proposals.

² Listing no - 1192631

³ Listing no - 1132786

3 Development Proposals

The Rockingham Centre, West Street, Wath-upon-Dearne

- 3.1 The planning application seeks a change of use from education (use class D1) to 28 apartments (use class C3) with associated parking (11 spaces) and amenity space.
- 3.2 The conversion will provide 25 x one bed apartments and 3 x two-bedroom apartments. The existing car park to the front of the Rockingham Centre will be rationalised to create 10 standard car parking spaces plus one disabled space. Provision is also made for a cycle store in the lower ground floor area. The existing soft landscaping at the frontage of the building will be retained and additional new soft and hard landscaping will be provided to the frontage and side of the existing building.
- 3.3 The external alterations to the building are limited to those required to facilitate the conversion of the building into apartments. On the Church Street elevation, it is proposed to insert a new full height louvered opening. Two new windows will be inserted onto the Biscay Way elevation that creates two double width openings at ground and first floor in the hallway of the building. All of the existing windows openings have been slightly modified with lowered cills. It is proposed as part of the conversion to replace all of the existing windows with anthracite grey UPVC profile windows.

4 Pre-Application Advice

- 4.1 Pre- Application advice was sought from Rotherham MBC on 8th June 2018. The Council provided a response on 19th July 2018⁴. The response can be summarised as follows:
- 4.2 The site is allocated as a community facility in the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) which forms part of the Rotherham Development Plan (Policy SP62).
- 4.3 The Council advised that parts d-g of Policy SP62 must be satisfied in supporting documents accompanying any application i.e:
- *d. the site or premises have been marketed to the Council's satisfaction for at least 12 months and included both traditional and web-based marketing, and regular advertisement in local, regional and / or national publications as appropriate; and*
 - *e. opportunities to re-let premises have been fully explored including the formation of a social enterprise or charitable group that can take over the premises; and*
 - *f. the premises / site have been marketed at a price which is commensurate with market values (based on evidence from recent and similar transactions and deals); and*
 - *g. it has been demonstrated that the terms and conditions set out in the lease are reasonable and attractive to potential businesses, and that no reasonable offer has been refused.*
- 4.4 In Transportation terms the Council has confirmed that the level of car parking is acceptable as the site is within a highly sustainable location.
- 4.5 The Council has asked for a Travel Plan including measures to promote sustainable transport initiatives. The Council has identified a financial contribution of £500 per apartment in accordance with the Council's good practice "*Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Parking Guidance.*"
- 4.6 The Council has referenced the minimum internal space standards identified in the *South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide* and advised that the proposed development would be assessed in the context of this guidance.
- 4.7 The Council also referenced the standards for private amenity space for new residential developments detailed in the *South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide* and advised that the current proposals would fall slightly short of this and that justification would be required for any departure from the guidelines.
- 4.8 The Council advises that the site is within the Wath Conservation Area but acknowledges that the proposed external alterations are minimal and therefore are considered to be acceptable.
- 4.9 The Council advised that the planning application would need to be accompanied by a bat survey.
- 4.10 The Council advised that they would require 25% of the scheme to be affordable units.

⁴ Ref: RB2018/0904/ The pre-application advice was provided by Emma Ottewell of Rotherham MBC.

5 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 The development proposals for the site will be assessed against the Statutory Development Plan which comprises the Rockingham Core Strategy (2014) and the Rockingham Sites and Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) (2018⁵). The National Planning Policy Framework (2018) and the South Yorkshire Design Guide are also material considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

- 5.2 The NPPF advocates a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this presumption means:
- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
 - where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 5.3 **Paragraph 8** of the NPPF states that there are three objectives to achieve sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.
- 5.4 **Paragraph 122** of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:
- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
 - b) local market conditions and viability;
 - c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
 - d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
 - e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.
- 5.5 **Paragraph 127** of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will (inter-alia):
- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

⁵ Adopted 27th June 2018.

- are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

5.6 **Paragraph 128** of the NPPF states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals.

5.7 **Paragraph 130** of the NPPF states that where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.

5.8 **Paragraph 189** of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Rotherham Sites and Policies DPD 2018

5.9 The application site is identified in the Sites and Policies DPD Proposals Map (sheet 1) as an area designated for community facilities, specifically Civic Buildings (see figure 2 below).

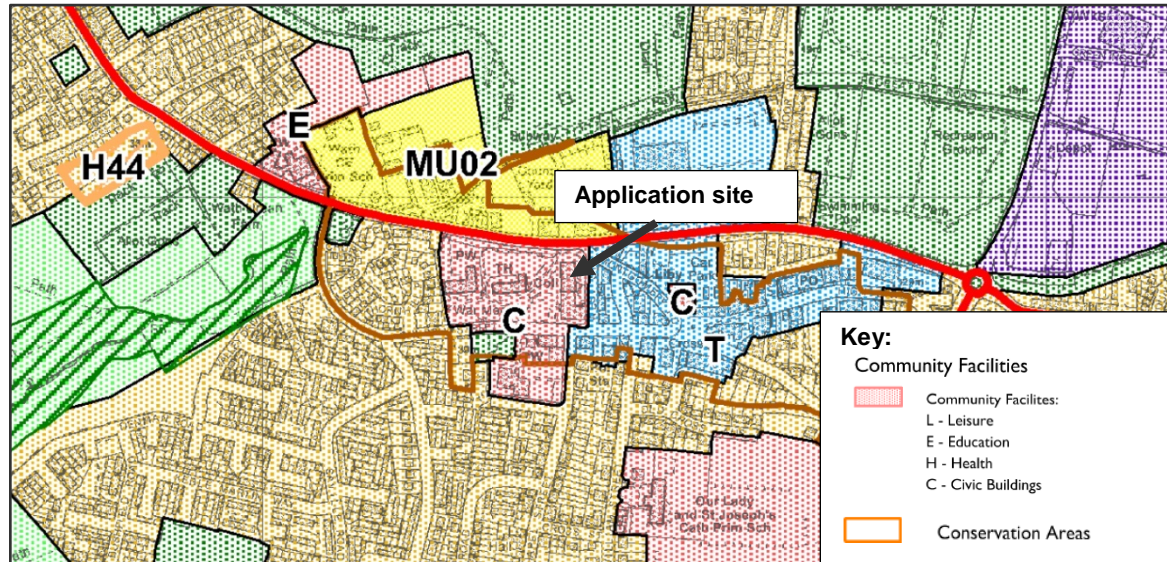


Figure 2: Extract of Rotherham Sites and Policies DPD Proposals Map

5.10 **Policy SP64** states that areas allocated on the policies map for community facilities will be retained or developed for such purposes. The loss of community facilities will only be permitted where (inter alia) the retention of the land or building in community use is no longer viable on the basis that:

d. the site or premises have been marketed to the Council's satisfaction for at least 12 months and included both traditional and web-based marketing, and regular advertisement in local, regional and / or national publications as appropriate; and

e. opportunities to re-let premises have been fully explored including the formation of a social enterprise or charitable group that can take over the premises; and

f. the premises / site have been marketed at a price which is commensurate with market values (based on evidence from recent and similar transactions and deals); and

g. it has been demonstrated that the terms and conditions set out in the lease are reasonable and attractive to potential businesses, and that no reasonable offer has been refused.

- 5.11 **Policy SPS8** requires all forms of development to create decent living and working environments.
- 5.12 **Policy SP35** states that planning permission for development likely to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on (inter alia) protected species will only be granted if they can demonstrate that there are no alternative sites with less or no harmful impacts that could be developed and that mitigation and / or compensation measures can be put in place that enable the status of the species to be conserved or enhanced.
- 5.13 **Policy SP41** states that development proposals within or likely to affect the setting of a Conservation Area will be considered against the following principles (inter alia):
- a. developments are required to ensure the preservation or enhancement of the special character or appearance of Rotherham's Conservation Areas and their settings;
 - b. there is a presumption in favour of the preservation of buildings and structures, both listed and unlisted, which make a positive contribution to the special character or appearance of conservation areas.
- 5.14 **Policy SP40** relates to listed buildings and states that (inter alia) the Council encourages the development of good quality, contextual design, including any development within the setting of listed buildings. Development which has an adverse effect on the setting of listed buildings will not be acceptable;
- 5.15 **Policy SP55** states that all forms of development are required to be of high quality, incorporate inclusive design principles, create decent living and working environments, and positively contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of an area and the way it functions.
- 5.16 **Paragraph 4.8** states that it is estimated that 1,980 homes will be delivered through windfall in the period 2016- 2028. The proposed conversion of this former educational site will make a contribution towards this windfall provision.

Rotherham Core Strategy 2014

- 5.17 **Policy CS1** identifies Wath as a principle settlement for growth that will accommodate 9% of the Borough's housing requirement over the plan period. Paragraph 5.2.20 of the supporting text for the policy advises that Wath is well located as a transport hub and provides significant residential and employment opportunities for new development on previously developed land within the settlement.
- 5.18 **Policy CS7** expects housing proposals to deliver a mix of sizes, types and tenures taking into account an up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The policy also sets out the targets for affordable housing and requires developments of 15 or more dwellings to deliver 25% affordable homes, unless it is not financially viable to do so.
- 5.19 **Policy CS14** is a criteria based policy that promotes accessibility. Relevant to this proposal is

criterion a), which requires new development to be in highly accessible locations. In particular high density development should be near to public transport interchanges or frequent public transport links.

- 5.20 **Policy CS29** supports the retention, provision and enhancement of a range of community and social facilities in accessible locations.

South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide 2011

- 5.21 The South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide provides design guidelines for all residential developments in South Yorkshire. The document is underpinned by design principles in Building for Life. The pre-application advice from Rotherham MBC referred to the need for the proposed development to meet the minimum internal spacing standards and the standards for private amenity space identified in the guide.

Minimum Internal Spacing Standards

- 5.22 The minimum open space standards (shown at table A2.1 of the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide) are replicated below:

Dwelling Size	Studio 1 Person	1 Bed 1 Person	1 Bed 2 Person	2 Bed 3 Person	3 Bed 4 Person	4 Bed 5 Person or more
Double Bedroom		12	12	12	12	12
Single Bedroom			7	7	7	7
Living Room (L)		13	13	13	15	15
Living/ Dining (DL)		16	16	17	18	19
Dining room (D)						
Kitchen (K)		13	9	11	13	13
Kitchen/ Dining (KD)		9	13	13	11	12
Open Plan/ combined (KDL)		24	24	27	30	
Bathroom/ WC combined	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Storage	1.5	2.5	3.5	3.75	4.5	5.5
Overall floor area	33	46	47	62	77	93

K=cooking, D=eating, L=living

Table 2: Table illustrating Internal Spacing Standards from the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide.

Private Amenity Space Standards

5.23 The private amenity space standards detailed in the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide are briefly summarised below:

- A.1.2 Shared private space for flats must be a minimum of 50 square metres plus an additional 10 square metres per unit either as balcony space or added to shared private space.
- A.1.3 Where shared private space cannot be provided balconies must be provided.
- A.1.4 Balconies must be a minimum of 3 square metres and provide usable space clear of door swings to count toward the minimum requirements.
- A.1.5 The amount of shared private space to be provided will also depend on the quality, quantity and accessibility of local public open space.
- A.1.6 External space should be designed as an integral part of the development, with priority given to private rather than communal space.
- A.1.7 Shared private space must be located where it is:
 - accessible to disabled people
 - well overlooked and near active lines of movement
 - takes advantage where possible of long distance views and mature planting
 - receives sunshine over at least half the area on 21 March/September.

6 Design and Access Statement

Amount

- 6.1 The proposed development will provide 28no apartments, comprising 25no. one bed apartments, and 3no. two bed apartments. The schedule of accommodation is provided on the accompanying planning drawings.

Density

- 6.2 The proposed development is at a density of 194 dwellings per hectare.

Appearance

- 6.3 The external alterations proposed are minimal and include replacement anthracite grey UPVC windows, a new full height louvered AOV on the church street elevation, and new brickwork (to match existing) on the West Street and open space side rear elevation. Additional information is provided on the accompanying planning drawings.

Landscaping

- 6.4 The existing landscaping is to be retained and pruned. Additional landscaping is proposed along the West Street elevation to provide a barrier between residents and the entrance/ car parking area. An additional Amenity Space is provided to the north of the site. Additional information can be found on the accompanying planning drawings.

Access

- 6.5 The site is accessible from West Street. Access to the site is level and therefore, considered to be accessible to all.
- 6.6 The site lies within a location which is considered to be highly sustainable, with good access to surrounding public transport facilities, shops and services.

7 Analysis

Principle of Development

7.1 The planning application seeks the change of use of The Rockingham Centre (use class D1) to 28 residential apartments. The site is adjacent to the town centre of Wath-upon-Deerne and is within walking distance of the public transport (bus) interchange and local amenities (see table 1 page 6). The site is therefore considered to be within a highly sustainable location. National Planning Policy supports the reuse of existing buildings and the efficient use of land. The site is identified as a community facility (Civic Buildings) within the Rotherham Sites and Policies DPD. Policy SP64 relates to community facilities and states that (inter-alia) they can only be considered for reuse where there is no proven need for the facility. The policy states that this is to be demonstrated via the submission of evidence of 12 months marketing of the property. A marketing exercise has been undertaken for the property for the required 12-month period. The marketing evidence is provided at appendix A of this report. This information comprises the following information:

1. Sales Particulars;
2. Full brochure details marketed on website of Burgess Commercial
<https://www.burgesscommercial.co.uk/properties/freehold-former-educational-building>
3. Distribution of particulars to an extensive mailing list of local businesses and agents;
4. Details of property listed within our Commercial Register, which is distributed to our local mailing list.
5. Appropriate signage erected to the front of the building
6. Exposure on Rightmove Commercial website (www.rightmove.co.uk).

7.2 Further detail on this is provided at paragraph 6.3 (below). Pre-application advice was sought from the Council and identified the following key issues:

- Community Facility;
- Spacing Standards/Amenity Standards;
- Transport;
- Affordable Housing;
- Heritage, and;
- Ecology.

7.3 This section will seek to demonstrate the benefits of the proposed scheme and its broad compliance with national and local planning policy.

Community Facility

7.4 The Rockingham Centre is part of a wider allocation for community facilities (Civic) in the Rotherham Sites and Policies DPD (see figure 2, page 10). The Rockingham Centre was previously in use as part of Dearne Valley College. The Director of Estates at Dearne Valley College advised that the Rockingham Centre closed as an efficiency measure and the facilities have transferred to the Manvers site.

- 7.5 The site is owned by Rockingham Metropolitan Borough Council. Following its closure, the site was marketed for sale by Burgess Commercial (on behalf of Rotherham MBC) for 12 months. It is understood that in the marketing period there was just one enquiry for a non -residential use which did not come to fruition. Appendix A provides details of the marketing exercise including both traditional and web based marketing and regular advertisements in appropriate national and local publications. The marketing evidence demonstrates that the building was marketed at a price which is commensurate with market values. The marketing evidence also demonstrates that no reasonable offer has been refused. It is therefore considered that the development proposals are in accordance with Policy SP64 and have met the requirements of subsections d-g in this policy.

Spacing Standards

Internal Space Standards

- 7.6 The South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide identifies internal space standards for new residential developments and changes of use. In the pre-application response Rotherham MBC advised that the proposed drawings (as drafted) do not meet the internal spacing standards identified in the Guide and replicated at table 2 (page 12) of this Statement. The proposed development has been reviewed against the spacing standards and whilst there are some apartments that do not meet the exact spacing standards, in most cases there is a negligible difference between the proposed floor area and the relevant standard. The proposed development will involve the reuse of an existing vacant building in accordance with national planning policy. The refit of the building is constrained to a certain degree by the current configuration of windows and doors (the majority of which will be retained). It will also deliver a range and mix of low cost housing. Empire Property Concepts Ltd has successfully delivered similar schemes in neighbouring Local Authority areas within South Yorkshire (i.e. Doncaster and Wakefield). It is therefore considered that the size and mix of apartments proposed is proportionate to the development and that the difference between the spacing standards and the proposed floor areas is negligible.

Amenity Space Standards

- 7.7 The South Yorkshire Residential Design guide also identifies external amenity space standards for new residential developments. There are two areas of amenity space proposed as part of the development (see plan ref: P6). The total area of these spaces is 276sqm which is slightly short of the standards advocated in the guidance (303sqm). However, there is nearby recreational amenity space to the north and north east of the development (see figure 3, page 16), which are within approximately 5 minutes' walk (0.3 miles) of the site and could be utilised by new residents.

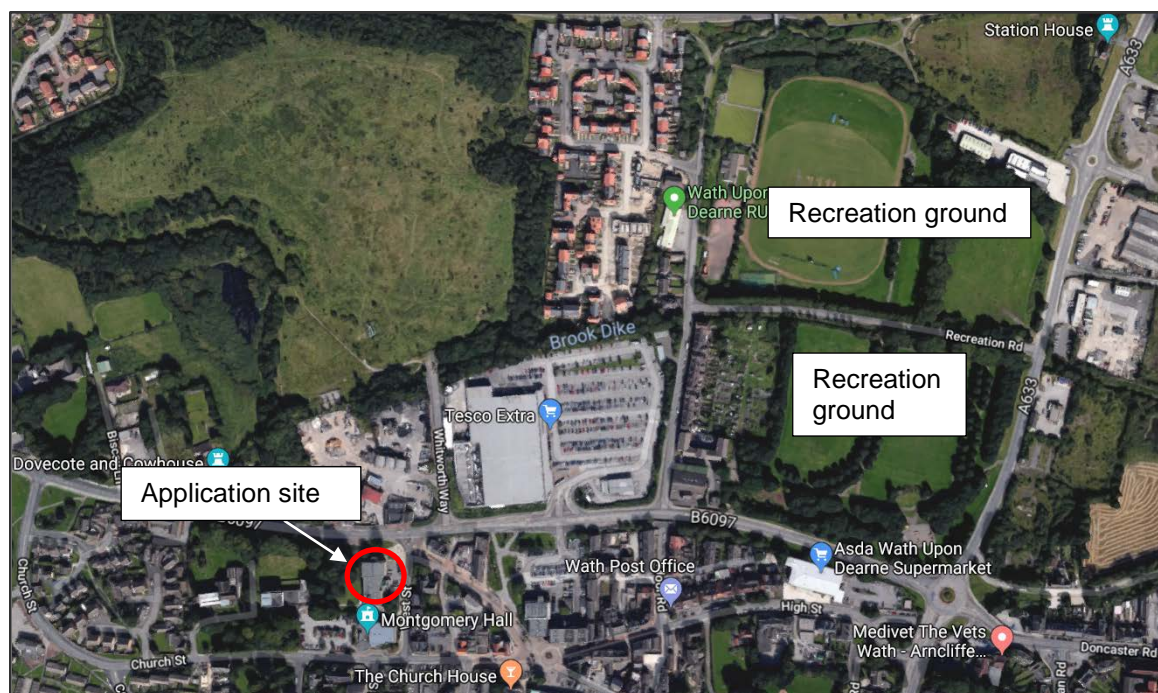


Figure 3 - Amenity open space in the locality of the development.

- 7.8 It is therefore considered that the level of amenity open space to be provided combined with the existing amenity space within close walking distance of the site is sufficient for the development.

Transport

- 7.9 The site is in a highly sustainable location adjacent to Wath-upon-Dearne town centre and close to the public transport interchange (approximately 119 metres) which provides frequent links to Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham, which in turn provide wider links by bus and rail. As stated, the site is adjacent to the town centre and therefore is close to local amenities (see table 1, page 6).
- 7.10 In the pre-application response provided by Rotherham MBC, the Highways Team have advised that the development proposals are acceptable in principle, subject to the provision of a Travel Plan and a financial contribution of £500 per apartment in accordance with the Council's good practice guidance. 'Travel Plans and Parking Guidance'. It is considered that a Travel Plan is not required for a development of this size (28 apartments). National guidance states that Travel Plans and Transport Assessments are only required over a threshold of 80 dwellings. The proposed development is for just 28 apartments. Moreover, the development is in a highly sustainable location. Travel Plans are typically required where proposals are less sustainable to try to persuade residents to use sustainable modes of transport. In this case, a reduced number of parking spaces will be provided (11 spaces for 28 apartments), therefore, it is anticipated that future residents will utilise the site's sustainable location and existing transport links.
- 7.11 It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with national and local planning policy and that a Travel Plan (and associated developer contributions) are not required or justified.

Affordable Housing

- 7.12 Rotherham Core Strategy Policy CS7 requires developments of 15 or more dwellings to deliver 25% affordable homes, unless it is not financially viable to do so. The development proposals will deliver

low cost apartments, increasing housing choice in a sustainable location. A Viability Appraisal is currently being prepared for the site (by Cushman & Wakefield) and will form part of this planning application. The Viability Appraisal will follow this submission.

Heritage

- 7.13 The site is within the Wath Conservation Area. There are also two listed buildings to the west of the site, The Town Hall (Grade II listed) and All Saints Church (Grade I listed) see figure 4 - below. The development proposals involve the reuse of the existing Rockingham Centre building with minimal external changes. It is considered that the proposals will have a neutral impact on the Wath Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings. The proposals are therefore in accordance with Sites and Policies DPD Policies SP40 and SP41 and national planning policy.

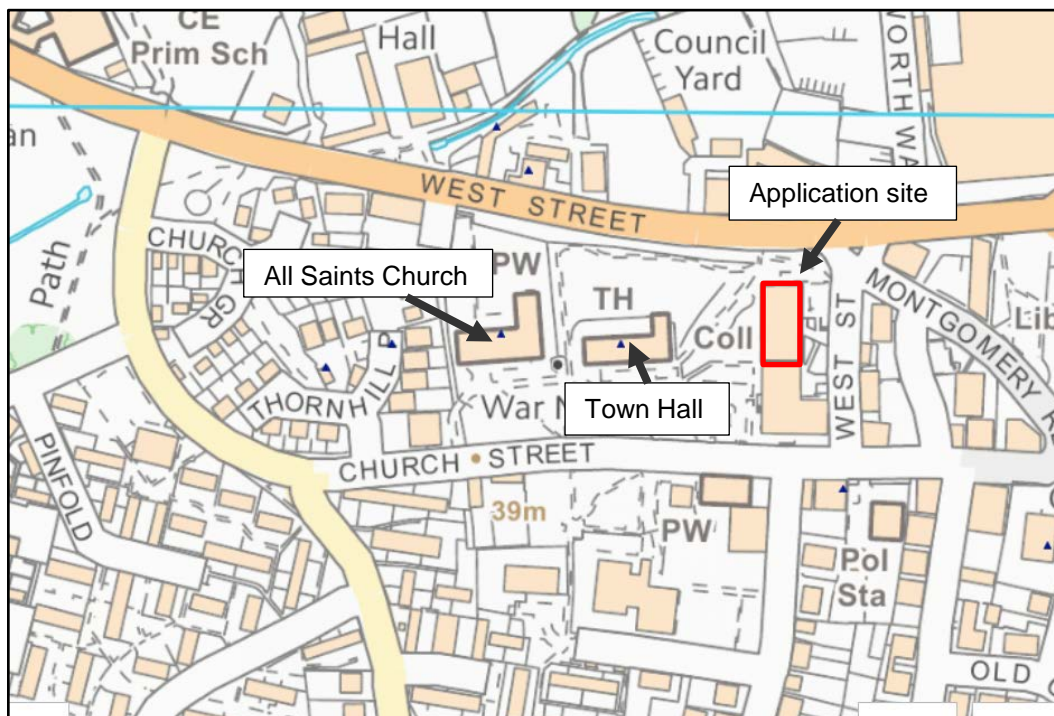


Figure 4 – Extract of Historic England Online Map.

Ecology

- 7.14 The pre-application advice letter from Rotherham MBC advised that the site had potential for bats and requested that a Bat Roost Survey be undertaken and included within the planning application pack. A Bat Roost Survey has been undertaken by Weddle Landscape and Ecology and is included in the application pack. The Survey found that the building is considered to have negligible suitability for roosting bats.

8 Summary

- 8.1 This report can be summarised as follows:
- 8.2 The development proposes the change of use of The Rockingham Centre from educational use (use class D1) to 28 residential apartments (use class C3).
- 8.3 The site is allocated for community use in the Sites and Policies DPD.
- 8.4 The site is in a highly sustainable location adjacent to Wath-upon-Dearne town centre and is close to a public transport interchange.
- 8.5 The Rockingham Centre is currently vacant. The owners of the building (Rotherham MBC) have marketed the property for 12 months in accordance with Sites and Policies DPD Policy SP64. There was no interest in the building for a community facility.
- 8.6 The development proposals have been assessed against the internal space standards and amenity space standards in the South Yorkshire Design Guide. The analysis found that there is a negligible difference between the proposed floor areas and the spacing standards.
- 8.7 The proposals will utilise existing public transport links and amenities by nature of its central location. The development will provide limited parking (11 spaces) befitting its sustainable location.
- 8.8 A Viability Appraisal is currently being prepared for this site and will follow this submission.
- 8.9 The Rockingham Centre is within the Wath Conservation Area and is close to two listed buildings (The Grade II listed Town Hall and Grade I listed All Saints Church). The external changes to the building will be minimal and therefore it is considered that there will be a neutral impact on the Conservation Area and associated listed buildings.
- 8.10 A Bat Roost Survey has been undertaken and found that there is a negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- 8.11 It is considered that the development proposals accord with national and local planning policy.
- 8.12 It is therefore requested that the application be considered favourably and approved without delay.

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