



## Empire looking to expand after £1.85m property purchase



South Yorkshire-based development company Empire Property Concepts is poised for significant expansion after completing the £1.85 million acquisition of a government building in Barnsley.

Empire will embark on the conversion of Joseph Locke House from offices to residential use early in 2017. The five-storey property of nearly 45,000 square feet will continue to provide opportunities for commercial use until the expiry of leases to existing tenants.

Under managing director Paul Rothwell, Doncaster-based Empire has built up a track record of converting offices and refurbishing existing apartments to create new residential opportunities across the region.

He Joseph Locke House to the portfolio by purchasing the building as a partner in Doncaster Property Developments Ltd.

Joseph Locke House was built in 1991 in Heelis Street, Barnsley, as a five storey property plus basement and two car parks with spaces for more than 130 vehicles.

Historically the building has housed the Jobcentre and benefits offices and the top two floors and half of the third floor are still occupied by the Department for Work & Pensions, which has a lease until early 2018.

Doncaster-based Barnsdales, who acted for Mapeley in finding a buyer, will be joint agents in marketing the commercial availability of the building.

Barnsdales will also manage the property for Empire and Barnsdales FM will provide facilities management services.

He said: “We bought Joseph Locke House because it is a big, solid building and we think it would have cost us a lot more to build than we paid for it. It’s in good condition and it’s just right for our type of development. The council has approved a scheme for 170 residential units in double quick time. “The remaining leases expire in early 2018. For now the focus is on securing some short term commercial interest and we will then begin the job of converting it to residential. “The approach will be similar to that adopted by Empire on other schemes, but on a larger scale. Empire is currently converting about 200 units a year and that figure is increasing all the time.”

Read more at: <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/empire-looking-to-expand-after-1-85m-property-purchase-1-8225840>