

**Committee Report**

<b>Application No:</b>	<b>DC/17/01296/FUL</b>
<b>Case Officer</b>	<b>Lindsay Coyle</b>
<b>Date Application Valid</b>	<b>30 November 2017</b>
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Mr Stephen Johnson</b>
<b>Site:</b>	<b>19-21 Derwent Street Chopwell NE17 7HU</b>
<b>Ward:</b>	<b>Chopwell And Rowlands Gill</b>
<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Change of use from Bank (A2) to three dwellings with a dormer extension to rear (C3) (as amended 10/01/2018)</b>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>GRANT</b>
<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Full Application</b>

**1.0 The Application:****1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

- 1.2 The application site is an end of terrace, comprising the former Lloyds Bank (Use Class A2) at the junction of Derwent Street and South Road in Chopwell. The property is currently vacant and has been so following the closure of the bank in March 2017.
- 1.3 At ground floor level the property comprises the commercial area of the bank with a six bedroom flat, set over two floors above. The flat is accessed from the rear of the property. The property currently has no off street car parking associated with either use.
- 1.4 The application site forms part of the Chopwell Local Centre which comprises of a mix of retail units, services and facilities to meet the day to day needs of the local community. However in recent years Chopwell has seen a decline in shops and services
- 1.5 In addition to the commercial uses, residential properties are also found within the surrounding area, comprising of converted commercial premises (for example No.'s 46/48 Derwent Street (DC/08/01273/COU) and at the former curtain factory in the north of the village (DC/16/00865/FUL) and existing flats above commercial premises on Derwent Street. Beyond Derwent Street, there are detached, semi-detached and terrace properties on roads surrounding the site.

1.6 The site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor is the property a statutory Listed Building.

1.7 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The application proposes to change the use of the existing bank to residential comprising of three dwellings. Unit 1 comprises of four bedrooms, unit 2 has three bedrooms and unit 3 provides two bedrooms.

1.8 To facilitate the change of use alterations are proposed in the form of replacement / new doors and windows. Two single casement windows are proposed in place of the existing shopfront windows to the front of the property and on the side with South Road. One shopfront window would be removed along this side elevation. A new door and window inserted towards the rear portion. To the side elevation facing No.17 the external fire escape stairs will be removed together with the door at first floor level and a new door in place of the existing window is proposed.

1.9 A dormer window is also proposed on the rear roof slope to provide additional accommodation at second floor level. The dormer window would measure 3.35 wide by 3.8m deep and 2.67m high.

1.10 Two conservation style rooflight are proposed in the front roofslope to provide light and air into the bedroom it serves.

1.11 PLANNING HISTORY

The planning history of the site relates to adverts in association to the bank operation. There is no planning history relevant to this proposed change of use.

**2.0 Consultation Responses:**

Northumbrian Water            No comments to make on the application.

**3.0 Representations:**

Neighbour notifications were carried out in accordance with the formal procedures introduced in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015. Seven individual objections (1 from Councillor Dave Bradford and six from neighbouring residents). Two letters of support have been received.

3.1 The Councillor objections are summarised as follows:

- Out of character with Conservation Area
- Out of character with streetscene
- Residential Amenity

- Led by the Council and supported by the community groups regeneration of the business possibilities for this village will be investigated over the coming months.
- The change of use of this property will preclude a major potential space from being used as a commercial property just as work is being done to encourage such activity.
- Permission should be refused until we are clearer about the developments in the village.
- The site on the corner of the street is structurally important and one of those most preferred to be saved.
- Conversion is not a priority for the community.
- No objection to the plans if the shop could be saved for the village.
- The change of use should be refused until such a time as plans for the village are developed.

### 3.2 The individual objections are summarised as follows:

- Additional noise and disturbance
- Inadequate car parking
- Increase of traffic
- Highways safety
- Loss of privacy
- Construction traffic
- Out of character with streetscene
- Overdevelopment
- Enough rental properties in Chopwell
- Neighbours not consulted
- Old Lloyds Bank is a key feature to the village
- Chopwell is a historic village
- Low demand for housing
- The priority has to be to regenerate Chopwell
- Key objective is to bring back commercial properties into use.
- If change of use is granted that is the end of its future
- No objection to the upstairs being renovated as flats or the dormer window.
- Does not fit with the council's policy
- Too many have already been converted to residential

### 3.3 The letters of support are summarised as follows:

- Enhance the appearance of the main street and the village in general.
- Empty buildings become an eyesore and make the area look run down.
- What a great plan

- Great idea to give life to a sorry looking disused building in a deprived area which will make it look better
- Increase revenue for Gateshead Council

#### **4.0 Policies:**

NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
H3	Sites for New Housing
H5	Housing Choice
H9	Lifetime Homes
H13	Local Open Space in Housing Developments
H15	Play Areas in Housing Developments
H10	Wheelchair Housing
DC1D	Protected Species
DC2	Residential Amenity
ENV3	The Built Environment - Character/Design
CFR20	Local Open Space
CFR28	Toddlers' Play Areas
CFR29	Juniors' Play Areas
CFR30	Teenagers' Recreation Areas
RCL5	District and Local Centres
CS7	Retail and Centres
CS11	Providing a range and choice of housing
CS13	Transport
CS14	Wellbeing and Health
CS15	Place Making
The Gateshead Placemaking Guide SPD	

## **5.0 Assessment of the Proposal:**

5.1 The detailed planning considerations are the principle of the proposed development, residential amenity, design and appearance, car parking and highway safety and waste.

### **5.2 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The property is located within a Local Centre and as such the relevant policies concerning the change of use of the building from a bank to residential are RCL5 of the UDP and CS7 of the Core Strategy. Policy RCL5 sets out that within District and Local Centres, planning permission will be granted for retail and other shopping centre uses where it complies with a range of criteria. In considering changes of use from retail to other uses, particular regard will be had to the effect the loss of retail units would have on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.

5.3 The policy relates to the loss of retail units, as the unit is not in retail use this policy is not relevant in this case. In respect of the loss of other related shopping uses (such as Class A2 Bank), the saved UDP policy is silent.

5.4 The site is located within an area of important character as defined in the Placemaking SPD. The SPD seeks to resist the conversion of shop units to residential, to encourage public realm improvements and improvements to existing housing stock. However the guidance relates to the conversion of shops to residential and therefore is not directly relevant in this case.

5.5 Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy identifies Chopwell as falling within a Local Centre; however there are no primary frontage restrictions in the location concerned. The policy states that the vitality and viability of Local Centres will be protected by encouraging a balance of retail and supporting uses which are appropriate in scale; but provides no indication of what is considered to be appropriate scale within such locations.

5.6 The application site comprises one of 18 commercial premises in the Local Centre. In March 2017, nine units (including the application site) were recorded as being vacant. Surveys undertaken over the last three years conclude that seven properties were vacant in 2014 and 2015, eight properties in 2016 and nine in 2017. This demonstrates there is limited up take of existing vacant units in the Local Centre and the numbers of vacant units are gradually increasing.

5.7 Whilst the proposed change of use would reduce further the number of commercial properties in the Local Centre, there are currently eight other vacant commercial premises in the Local Centre which could be taken up by other commercial uses in the future.

5.8 Policy CS7 aims to protect the vitality and viability of Local Centres through encouraging a balance of retail and supporting uses, the loss of this individual unit will not result in harm to the Local Centre as sufficient alternative space within the centre is available.

5.9 Furthermore the change of use would bring about public and environmental benefits in the form of bringing this prominent building back into active use which will assist in improving the vitality and appearance of the area. For these reasons the principle of the change of use of this unit to residential is considered to be acceptable.

#### 5.10 Residential Use

Residential accommodation is an appropriate use within a Town / Local Centre and it is considered that the site meets the criteria set out in Policy H4 of the UDP in relation to its sustainable location, close to local services and public transport routes, and it would help to sustain the local community.

#### 5.11 Family Homes

Policy CS11 1 of the Core Strategy requires that a minimum of 60% of new private housing across the plan area is suitable and attractive for families (i.e. homes with three or more bedrooms). Saved UDP policy H5 also seeks to improve the choice of housing in Gateshead.

5.12 Two of the three dwellings would have 3 bedrooms or more, equating to a 66% provision of family homes. The proposal is in accordance with CSUCP policy CS11 1 and saved UDP policy H5, contributing to the requirement for the totality of development across the plan area to provide 60% family housing.

#### 5.13 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

##### Existing occupiers

5.14 It is not considered that the proposed change of use will result in any harmful impact to any existing adjoining occupier to the detriment of their amenity. The upper floors of the commercial unit are currently in residential use and therefore no material change is proposed.

5.15 The introduction of a dormer window to the rear roofslope would have one window that would face towards South Road. This window would measure 14m from the side boundary of the Redlands and in excess of 20m when measured from the existing ground floor side elevation of the Redlands, given these distances and the oblique views that would be gained from the new window, it is not considered that any harmful overlooking or loss of privacy would occur to the occupier of the Redlands. No other adjoining occupier is considered to be affected by these proposals and the development is

considered to concur with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy in respect of preventing negative impacts on residential amenity.

Future occupiers

- 5.16 Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that adequate space is provided inside and out to meet the needs of residents. The proposed dwellings would have more than adequate amount of internal amenity space to suit the needs of future occupants. Whilst limited space is provided externally in the form of a rear yard, this is not dissimilar to other residential properties found in the locality, which have a limited access to external amenity space. As such it is considered that the proposed change of use would not have any adverse impact on the future occupier's residential amenity.
- 5.17 Two rooflights are proposed to the front roofslope to provide light and air to the fourth (second floor bedroom). Whilst this room is currently used as a bedroom, the introduction of these rooflights would improve the living conditions in this room.
- 5.18 **DESIGN AND APPEARANCE**  
To facilitate the change of use very little external intervention is required except for the removal of the traditional shopfront glazing to be replaced with smaller domestic windows and the introduction of front doors to serve each dwelling. Since the application was originally submitted amendments have been sought to increase the size of the windows on the ground floor fronting Derwent Street from that previously proposed. The windows are now considered to be acceptable in relation to the window to wall ratio and will be more in keeping with the appearance of the property. No objections are raised to the location of the front doors.
- 5.19 The rear dormer window would be in keeping with the size and scale of the existing rear dormer window to No.15 Derwent Street and no objections are raised to the design or appearance of the proposed dormer.
- 5.20 In respect of the rooflights to the front roofslope, other rooflights can be viewed within Derwent Street and as such no objections are raised.
- 5.21 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in respect of its design and appearance and would comply with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.21 **CAR PARKING AND HIGHWAYS SAFETY**  
The site is located within the Chopwell Local Centre which has a small selection of shops and services. The site is also well served by buses with regular services stopping within 80m via the existing network of lit footways. The location is therefore considered sustainable.

- 5.22 Whilst there is no off street car parking proposed and there is no scope to provide any within the curtilage of the site; unrestricted on street parking opportunities is available in the immediate vicinity of the site and any prospective resident would be aware of this situation.
- 5.23 Gateshead Council's residential car parking standards require a minimum of 1 space per property plus a visitor space per 4 dwellings although lower provisions can be considered. The former use of the site as a bank and flat above must be taken into consideration and these uses would have generated a parking demand. As such it is not considered that the proposed use would not create any significant increase in parking demand over and above that of the existing use. Furthermore the proposal is not considered to have any significant impact upon the highway network and would accord with Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy and T1 of the UDP.
- 5.24 It is recommended that a condition be attached requiring the provision of secure, lockable and weatherproof cycle storage within the rear yard for each dwelling. Cycle storage in the form of individual lockers with a lockable door and a separate means of securing a bike internally is recommended.
- 5.25 **WASTE**  
No objections are raised on the basis that the existing refuse storage facility will remain as existing, located to the rear of the site within the yard, where bins can be easily moved from the property to the street for collection.
- 5.26 The proposal will not affect the current arrangements and is therefore acceptable from a waste servicing perspective.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Taking all the relevant issues into account it is therefore recommended that planning permission should be approved as the proposal will bring a prominent building back into active use which will assist in improving the vitality and appearance of the Local Centre. The development would provide two family sized dwellings in a sustainable location.
- 6.2 There will be no detrimental impact upon existing or future occupier's residential amenity, nor would the development have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area. No objections are raised on highways grounds.
- 6.3 Given the above, it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the planning conditions set out below:



## **7.0 Recommendation:**

That permission be GRANTED subject to the following condition(s) and that the Strategic Director of Communities and Environment be authorised to add, vary and amend the planning conditions as necessary:

1

The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason

To comply with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2

The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plan(s) as detailed below:

- SCC/MI/200 Location Plan
- SCC/MI/100 Existing Plan
- SCC/MI/200 Site Plan
- SCC/MI/200 Rev B Proposed Plan
- SCC/MI/101 Rev A Exist. and Prop. Elevations

Any material change to the approved plans will require a formal planning application to vary this condition and any non-material change to the plans will require the submission of details and the agreement in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any non-material change being made.

Reason

In order to ensure that the development is carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and any material and non-material alterations to the scheme are properly considered.

3

All external surfaces shall be completed in materials to match those of the existing building. Where new materials would differ in any way from those of the existing building, no development shall commence until samples of the proposed materials are made available for inspection on site and are subsequently approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with those details.

Reason

To safeguard the visual amenities of the area and to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse effect upon the appearance of the existing building in accordance with the NPPF, Saved Policies DC2 and ENV3 of the Unitary Development Plan and Policies CS14 and CS15 of the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne.

4

Prior to occupation of the development details for secure, lockable and weatherproof cycle storage for each dwelling within the curtilage of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

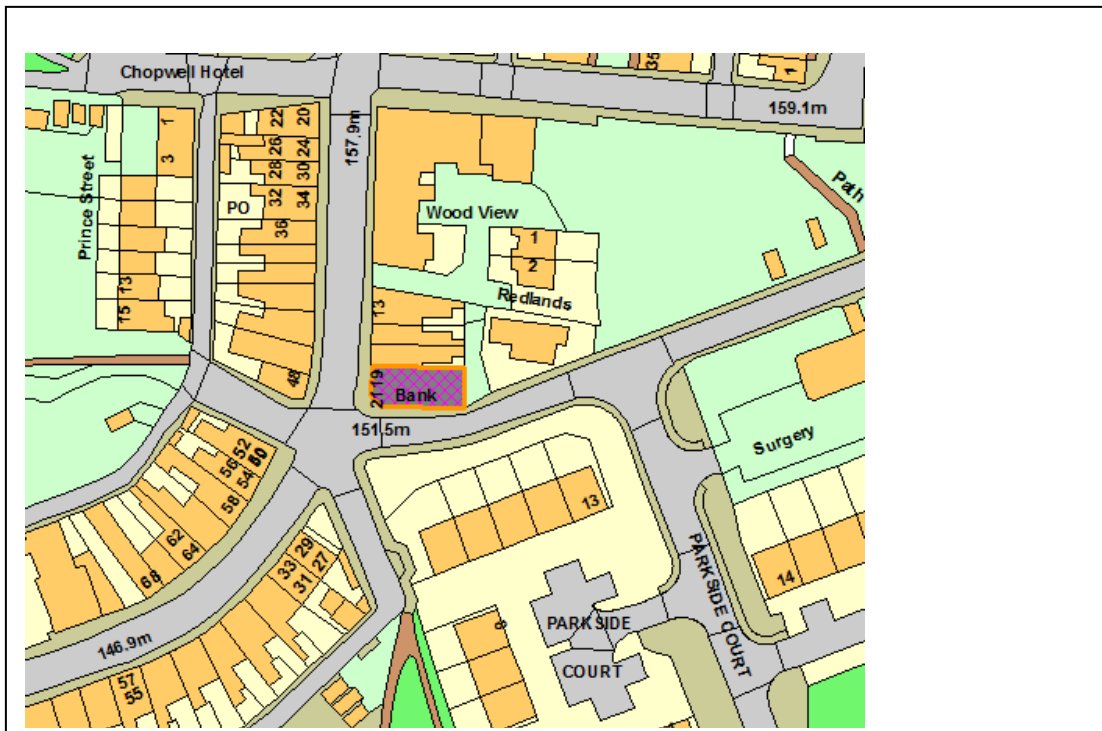
In order to ensure adequate provision for cyclists and in compliance with Policies DC4 and T5, of the Unitary Development Plan and the Gateshead Cycling Strategy.

5.

The details approved under condition 4 shall be wholly implemented before the development is brought into use, and thereafter permanently retained.

Reason

In order to ensure adequate provision for cyclists and in compliance with Policies DC4 and T5, of the Unitary Development Plan and the Gateshead Cycling Strategy.



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