

- a) **DOV/21/01938 – Change of use and conversion to 4 self-contained flats; insertion of 3 rooflights, 3 extraction fans, cycle stores, alterations to windows/doors, replacement access gates, erection of 1.8 metre high fence and gate (existing single storey rear extension to be demolished) - Lloyds Bank Plc Building, High Street, Wingham**

Reason for Report: Number contrary views (16)

b) **Summary of Recommendation**

Planning Permission be GRANTED

c) **Planning Policy and Guidance**

Dover District Core Strategy (2010)

DM1, DM13

Regulation 18 draft Dover District Local Plan

The consultation draft of the Dover District Local Plan is a material planning consideration in the determination of this planning application. At this stage in the plan making process (early), however the policies of the draft plan have little weight and are not considered to materially affect the assessment of this application and the recommendation as set out.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF)

Paragraphs 2, 7, 8, 11, 130, 189-208

Kent Design Guide

National Design Guide

Section 72(1) of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990

Nationally Described Space Standards (2015)

d) **Relevant Planning History**

Various applications in relation to signage when premises in use as a bank

DOV21/00535 - Change of use and conversion to 4no. self-contained flats, insertion of 3no. rooflights, 3no. extraction fans, alterations to windows/doors and erection of an attached dwelling (Class C3) (existing single storey rear extension hard standing to be demolished) - Refused

e) **Consultee and Third-Party Representations**

Wingham Parish Council – OBJECT

Councillors previously objected to the proposed change of use of the former Lloyds bank based primarily on a complete lack of parking provision. A reduction in the number of residential units (from 5 to 4) is unlikely to significantly improve this situation.

It is noted that previously there were no objections to the development on the grounds of highways/parking on the part of the DDC, however would comment that this area is not a

Town Centre and that parking in Wingham generally, and especially in the area in which the former Lloyds Bank is located, is extremely limited.

In addition to concerns in relation to resident parking object to the proposed change of use on the basis of its scale and likely adverse impact on existing residential properties in Harris's Alley and the conservation area. Realistically Harris's Alley will not be able to cope with four new dwellings and both the short (construction phase) and longer-term (resident access and parking issues) impacts of the proposed development will have a negative impact on the conservation area.

Councillors support the notion that the former Lloyds Bank building is put back into use and appreciate that there are always going to be issues associated with the space available and the location in question. It is further considered, however, that reasonable efforts might not have been made to find an alternative, commercial use for the building.

DDC Heritage – The building is identified as a non-designated heritage asset within the conservation area. On request, further information was submitted to demonstrate that the building has suffered from significant alterations and additions (including the complete replacement of the roof) and the value of this building to the special interest of the CA is therefore negligible. The proposed development /proposal reflects the architectural form and character of neighbouring buildings and is considered to be appropriate in relation to the character of the CA. As a result, there is no harm to the CA.

The building has a dominant character and makes a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. The proposal would cause no harm to the character of the conservation area as the physical alterations to the exterior are limited to changes to the windows to the ground floor to include provision of opening elements. This is a minor change that subject to detail is acceptable. Recommend conditions requiring details of proposed joinery. Additionally, although not noted on the plans, it is possible that Building Regulations will require the change of the existing historic windows as this is a change of use to residential and the condition will cover the appropriate replacement of these should it be necessary. Also recommend a condition for flues/vents to manage these necessary items to ensure that they are sensitively located particularly where such items for proposed new kitchens/bathrooms have the potential to impact on the principle elevation of this building.

East Kent Public Rights of Way - No comments received

DDC Environmental Health – No objection - From proposed floor plans submitted... stacking arrangements are not ideal, eg. bedroom on the first floor is directly above the living/kitchen diner on the ground floor, and bedrooms on the ground floor are located directly beneath living/dining areas on the first floor. However... from the D&A the proposed Party Wall and Floors between the apartments will be fully compliant with the Building Regulations in respect of Sound and Fire separation.

Southern Water – no objections raised – information provided for the applicant.

Third Party Representations - A total of 16 individuals have raised objections to the proposal summarised as follows:

- No parking provision and pressure on parking in an already congested area
- Nearby roads should be permit only
- Building should be listed
- Loss of commercial space

In Addition, one comment was received in support of the proposal:

- Use of redundant buildings should be encouraged

1 The Site and Proposal

- 1.1 The application relates to a two-storey flat roof building, located on the corner of High Street and Harris' Alley, set within the Wingham Conservation Area (CA) and within the village confines. The building has the appearance of a typical bank, and whilst not listed, has a prominent and positive impact on the street scene. The original building has been subject to extensions and alterations. No's 34-38 High Street which adjoin the application site to the north and 31-33 High Street are Grade II listed buildings.
- 1.2 The application is for the change of use and conversion of the existing building to 4no. self-contained flats. Each flat would have one bedroom and a study, with a kitchen/ living area and bathroom. As the internal space is reconfigured, the windows would be altered: one window on the side elevation would be altered to be the same design as other windows on that elevation. To the rear, the windows are reconfigured and replaced with a door. All windows and doors are to be timber.
- 1.3 The proposal also includes the insertion of 3no. rooflights and 3no. extraction fans, which would sit within the flat roof; replacement access gates; and the erection of a 1.8m high fence and gate. The existing single storey rear extension would be demolished to create a refuse/recycling and cycle storage area. To facilitate the conversion the intention is to demolish the existing single storey rear extension.
- 1.4 A similar proposal was submitted and subsequently refused under DOV/21/00535. The reason for this refusal was as follows:

The proposed development, comprising a two storey extension, by virtue of its scale, form, siting and setting, would appear as a cramped overdevelopment of the site, which would detract from the visual quality of the area and the way in which it functions, would fail to sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and would harm the living conditions of neighbouring residential occupiers. No benefits for the proposal has been demonstrated sufficient to set aside the harm identified. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Paragraphs 127 and 195 of the NPPF 2018.

- 1.5 This application has removed the two-storey extension element of the proposed conversion.

2 Main Issues

- 2.1 The main issues for consideration are considered to be:
- The principle of the development
 - Impact on conservation area and visual amenity
 - Residential amenity
 - Highway Safety

Assessment

The Principle of Development

- 2.2 The site is located within the settlement confines and the development therefore accords with Policy DM1, subject to impact on visual and residential amenity and other material considerations.

Impact on Conservation Area and Visual Amenity

- 2.3 The NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that developments 'will function well and add to the overall quality of the area', be 'visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping', be 'sympathetic to local character and history' and 'establish or maintain a strong sense of place' (paragraph 130). Furthermore, Paragraphs 201 and 202 require that regard must be had for whether development would cause harm to any heritage asset (both designated and non-designated), whether that harm would be substantial or less than substantial and whether, if harm is identified, there is sufficient weight in favour of the development (public benefits) to outweigh that harm. Regard must also be had for Section 72(1) of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 which states that, 'In the exercise, with respect to any building or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- 2.4 The application site sits within the Wingham Conservation Area (CA) The general character of the dwellings is a terraced form. Whilst there is some variety in the street, the context is of similar proportioned buildings set within a regular historic street pattern. The existing premises, whilst two storey is substantial in scale, mass and height. It stands proud of the buildings at either side and to the rear. It is surrounded by listed buildings. It is not proposed to alter the external appearance of the original building, therefore the main visual change will be the removal of the rear extension and changes to the windows as viewed from Harris's Alley. The removal of the flat roof rear extension is seen as a positive benefit. In turn, the fenestration changes are sensitive to the design and form of the existing building and will not result in a property that is out of keeping within the street scene.
- 2.5 For the above reasons, the development is considered to be acceptable in this location and is not visually inappropriate to its context. It is therefore considered to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with paragraphs 130, 189-208 of the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 2.6 As the conversion of the property would not create any additional mass to the building, there will be no potential for any adverse impact upon neighbouring properties. The property to the south of the site is a tearoom, with no windows on its flank elevation. There would therefore be no interlooking between these properties which are separated by Harris' Alley.
- 2.7 The property to the east of the site, Clement Cottage, has a window facing the site at first floor level. This window appears to be obscured glazed and may therefore serve a bathroom. Notwithstanding this, given the separation distances, it is not considered that the property would experience any harmful interlooking as a result of the proposals.
- 2.8 The bedroom window of Flat 4 would have long range views to the bottom of the garden of the neighbouring property, 34 High Street, however, due to the angle of

the views it is not considered that there would be any harmful overlooking to this property's most private garden space.

- 2.9 Environmental Health raised concerns for the potential occupants due to the stacking arrangement of the flats. However, the Design and Access Statement sets out how the proposed party wall and floors between the apartments will be fully compliant with the Building Regulations in respect of Sound and Fire separation, they raised no objection. The proposed apartments meet the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) and as such it is considered that the potential occupants would experience a good level of amenity.

Highway Safety

- 2.10 The conversion of Lloyds Bank would create 4 one-bedroom flats. Extensive representation has been made regarding the absence of any parking and the knock on effect in the locality. Due to the sustainable location with good pedestrian access to public transport and facilities such as shops, and other facilities needed for day-to-day living and the former use as a bank (A2 use), there would be no objection on highway grounds. It is accepted that residential accommodation can be provided within town centres without providing private/off street car parking.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Regulation 63: Appropriate Assessment

- 2.11 All impacts of the development have been considered and assessed. It is concluded that the only aspect of the development that causes uncertainty regarding the likely significant effects on a European Site is the potential disturbance of birds due to increased recreational activity at Sandwich Bay and Pegwell Bay. Detailed surveys at Sandwich Bay and Pegwell Bay were carried out in 2011, 2012 and 2018. However, applying a precautionary approach and with the best scientific knowledge in the field, it is not currently possible to discount the potential for housing development within Dover district, when considered in combination with all other housing development within the district, to have a likely significant effect on the protected Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Ramsar sites.
- 2.12 Following consultation with Natural England, the identified pathway for such a likely significant effect is an increase in recreational activity which causes disturbance, predominantly by dogwalking, of the species which led to the designation of the sites and the integrity of the sites themselves. The Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Ramsar Mitigation Strategy was agreed with Natural England in 2012 and is still considered to be effective in preventing or reducing the harmful effects of housing development on the sites.
- Given the limited scale of the development proposed by this application, a contribution towards the Councils Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Ramsar Mitigation Strategy will not be required as the costs of administration would negate the benefit of collecting a contribution. However, the development would still be mitigated by the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Ramsar Mitigation Strategy as the Council will draw on existing resources to fully implement the agreed Strategy.
- 2.13 Having had regard to the proposed mitigation measures, it is considered that the proposal would not have a likely significant adverse effect on the integrity of the protected Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Ramsar sites. The mitigation measures (which were agreed following receipt of ecological advice

and in consultation with Natural England) will ensure that the harmful effects on the designated site, caused by recreational activities from existing and new residents, will be effectively managed.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The proposals, due to their design and appearance, would not be out of keeping with the immediate character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the surrounding area. There would be no harm to residential amenity or highway safety. Consequently, the proposals would not conflict with the overarching aims and objectives of the NPPF and it is recommended that planning permission should be granted.

g) Recommendation

- I Planning permission be GRANTED, subject to the imposition of the following conditions:
- (1) 3-year time limit for commencement
 - (2) compliance with the approved plans
 - (3) Specific details condition for CA (joinery and flues/vents)
 - (4) Cycle and bin storage implemented before first occupation
- II Powers be delegated to the Planning and Development Manager to settle any necessary issues in line with the matters set out in the recommendation and as resolved by the Planning Committee.

Case Officer

Amber Tonkin