
APPLICATION NO.	P11/W1828
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	17.11.2011
PARISH	GORING
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mrs Ann Ducker MBE Mrs Pearl Slatter
APPLICANT	Ms Virginina Spencer
SITE	Former HSBC Bank High Street Goring-on-Thames, RG8 9AR
PROPOSAL	Retention of ground floor use & ATM, conversion and extension of first floor to provide two self contained apartments. (As amplified by e-mail from agent received 4 January 2012).
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	459933/180784
OFFICER	Mr P Bowers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is referred to the planning committee for a decision because the views of the Goring Parish Council differ from the recommendation.
- 1.2 The application site comprises a two storey building previously occupied by the HSBC Bank on the northern side of the High Street, Goring on Thames. The site is located in the Goring on Thames Conservation Area and within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The location of the site is shown on the attached plan which can be found at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 The front section of the building is two storey in height which includes the existing shop floor and first floor office space. At the rear is a single storey flat roof section which served the banks back office. The building is attached to buildings to the north, east and west.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission from the Council to change the use of the existing first floor to a 2 bedroom apartment and erect a first floor extension over the flat roof rear extension to form a 2 bedroom apartment. On the ground floor the layout is altered to allow for access to a staircase to the new units and create a lobby for the retained A2 use. The existing ATM on the front of the building is to be retained.
- 2.2 The plans accompanying the application can be found at **Appendix 2**. Full details of the application and the consultation responses can be found on the Councils website www.southoxon.gov.uk.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 **Goring Parish Council** – Recommend Refusal of Planning Permission

- Object on the basis that the proposal constitutes an overdevelopment of the site.

Neighbour Responses – 2 x Letters of Objection

Colebrook Studio

- Object to the increase in height which will cut out light to the building.
- Concern about the accuracy of the submission in respect of the requirements for louvred windows at Colebrook Studio.

The Old Bakehouse

- The lowering of the height of the extension is recognised as an improvement on the original planning application.
- Concern that the doors will provide access on to the flat roof to provide a sitting out area.
- Concern that the plans do not show a workable kitchen arrangement which will require increases in the height of the roof.

Flat 2, Colebrook

- Concern about the loss of light to both floors of the property.

Conservation Officer - No objection. Recommend a condition requiring sample materials.

Oxfordshire County Council Area Liaison Officer – No objection – Recommend conditions to be attached to any forthcoming planning permission.

- The proposed condition relating to cycle parking and the availability of public transport in the locality means that there is not a highway safety case for objecting to the proposal.

Waste Team - No strong views

County Archaeological Services - No strong views

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P11/W1269](#) - (04/10/2011)

Retention of ground floor use & ATM, conversion and extension of first floor to provide two self contained apartments.

[P85/W0313](#) - Approved (20/08/1985)

Change of use from butchers store to bank premises including new roof and upgrading existing structure.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;**

C2 - Harm to the AONB

CON7 - Proposals in a conservation area

D1 - Principles of good design

D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles

D3 - Outdoor amenity area

D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers

D6 - Community safety

D7 - Access for all

D8 - Conservation and efficient use of energy

G2 - Protect district from adverse development

G6 - Appropriateness of development to its site & surroundings

H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt

H5 - Housing sites in larger villages in the Green Belt

T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users
TC4 - Town centre residential use above commercial premises

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The main issues to consider as part of this application;

- **Whether the principle of new housing is acceptable.**
- **Whether this is an appropriate location for new dwellings.**
- **Impact on the amenities of the occupants of nearby properties.**
- **Impact on highway safety and parking.**
- **Impact on the character and appearance of the Goring on Thames Conservation Area.**
- **Impact on the special landscape character of the AONB.**

6.2 **Whether the principle of new housing is acceptable.**

6.3 Goring on Thames is a larger village outside of the green belt where, in terms of Policy H5 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP), new dwellings are normally permitted within the built confines of the village. The principle of two dwellings in this location is acceptable. However the acceptability of the proposal is subject to the development complying with the provisions of Policy H4 are as follows;

6.4 *i) An important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important view spoilt.*

ii) The design, height, scales and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings

iii) The character of the area is not adversely affected.

iv) There should be no overriding amenity or environmental or highway objections.

6.5 The detail of how the proposal meets these criteria is set out in the paragraphs below.

6.6 **Whether this is an appropriate location for new dwellings.**

6.7 Policy TC4 of SOLP encourages a diversity of uses and refers to town centres. Whilst Goring is not a town the policy does not strictly apply to this proposal however the thrust of the policy is relevant to this scheme.

6.8 It states that the use of upper levels above existing commercial premises in central locations will be permitted to change to residential use provided that the use does not adversely affect the viability of the ground floor use.

6.9 The existing ground floor is in A2 use which covers financial and professional services. Until recently the site was occupied by the HSBC bank. The proposed works to the existing building involves the subdivision of the first floor and creation of a two bedroom flat. The ground floor remains almost unchanged with the exception of works to the staircase and lobby allowing independent access to the first floor and the two new dwellings. The A2 use by its nature will not conflict with a residential use above and will not be compromised as a result of this development.

6.10 The site does not include any external private amenity areas for the occupants. This is however a very central location in walking distances to nearby open spaces and the

river. In this particular instance the lack of such space on the site is not a reason to resist the proposal.

- 6.11 Impact on the amenities of the occupants of nearby properties.**
- 6.12 Policy D4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan seeks to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties.
- 6.13 The subdivision of the existing first floor space does not result in works or alterations to the building that would create a harmful impact to any of the adjoining properties.
- 6.14 The main impact will come from the erection of the first floor extension above the existing flat roof at the rear of the building. This extension is surrounded on nearly all sides by existing buildings.
- 6.15 To the east is The Old Bakehouse which contains an office and an art studio/workshop, to the north is The Old Coach House, to the north west is Colebrook Studio and to the south west is Flat 2 Colebrook. The gap in the built form to the west between Flat 2 and Colebrook Studio is small courtyard areas serving the two dwellings.
- 6.16 The Old Coach House to the north has a blank brick wall above the existing flat roof which it physically abuts up to. The creation of the first floor extension will not give rise to an overbearing impact or an issue of overlooking to this property.
- 6.17 The main impact of this element of the development will be to The Old Bakehouse, Colebrook Studio and Flat 2 Colebrook.
- 6.18 In respect of The Old Bakehouse the property includes a pitched roof which slopes down to the flat roof of the application site. It includes two roof lights nearest the two storey end of the building and a dormer window and roof further northward in the roof slope facing the application sites flat roof.
- 6.19 The internal arrangements at The Old Bakehouse are such that the roof lights and dormer windows are located within the vaulted ceiling and are above head height so that they do not provide for views. They are however the only source of natural light for this portion of the building which include a workshop and an office.
- 6.20 The revised scheme has attempted to take on board the comments of the occupants of The Old Bakehouse. The key changes are that the eaves of the new roof have been lowered and the roof has been pulled away from the roof lights on the southern end and the dormer window. The views out of the roof lights and dormer windows looking skyward will not be presented by a brick wall but rather the sloping roof and sky above.
- The doors shown in the side of the extension lead out on to a section of the remaining flat roof. There is concern that this would be used as a sitting out area which would provide for views in to The Old Bakehouse. The remaining space also includes roof lights in to the ground floor A2 use below. The ability to use this area is extremely limited and is unlikely to be of a size that would be workable or attractive as a formal sitting area.
- 6.21 There will still clearly be an impact to the occupants of The Old Bakehouse however the space between them and the roof and its lower eaves level has reduced the impact to such an extent that it is not materially overbearing or oppressive in my view.
- 6.22 Flat 2 Colebrook extends across two levels and windows in the north facing elevation and courtyard below. Colebrook Studio has ground and first floor windows on the south

facing roof slope but these are covered by a louvered screen to stop overlooking of Flat 2 Colebrook. The scheme has been amended from the original application moving the new extension in from the eaves of the existing flat roof and has included screens to the side of the windows and beneath them to avoid overlooking to the side in to these two properties and below in to the court yard.

- 6.23 These screens bring the level of overlooking to a level that is considered acceptable in such a close and cramped environment.
- 6.24 The existing situation in the small area which includes Flat 2 and Colebrook Studio is cramped and enclosed. The pitched roof has been pulled in from the existing side walls and slopes away from the area between the two affected properties. Given the amount and height of existing buildings this new extent of roof does not give rise to an unacceptable overbearing or oppressive impact over and above the existing situation.
- 6.25 As such the proposed development accords with Policy D4.
- 6.26 **Impact on highway safety and parking.**
- 6.27 Policies T1 ad T2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 require that all new development does not harm the safety and convenience of pedestrians and cyclists and that they provide for an adequate level of parking and manoeuvring.
- 6.28 The nature of the first floor development means that there is no on site parking provision. Under normal circumstances two bedroom units should be providing for two spaces per dwelling. However, this is a central location with good bus links and it is within walking distance to the train station for greater commuting potential. With such good public transport links coupled with the nearby public car parks a refusal of planning permission on the lack of parking could not be sustained.
- 6.29 The frontage of the existing HSBC building is directly on to the pavement at a point in the High Street where the width of the carriageway is down to a single lane. This is an area of A No Waiting At Any Time (NWAAT) Traffic Regulation Order. The physical constraints along High Street in addition to scheduled enforcement, is sufficient to discourage any residents parking on the highway and avoiding a harmful impact to highway safety.
- 6.30 The proposal includes the provision of cycle storage and given the availability of public transport ensures that the proposal results in a sustainable form of development in accordance with Policies T1 and T2.
- 6.31 The site is land locked and surrounded on all but one side by buildings. There is local concern as to how the new extension will be constructed given the physical constraints; in particular the narrowness of the carriageway on the frontage. The ability to carry out a development is the concern of the developer and the onus is on them to be able to implement a planning permission.
- 6.32 **Impact on the character and appearance of the Goring on Thames Conservation Area.**
- 6.33 Policy CON7 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would harm the character or appearance of the conservation area. Development within the conservation area is required to be of a design and scale that is in sympathy with the established character of the area and that traditional materials should be used whenever it is appropriate to the character of the area.

6.34 The proposal involves the loss of a large extent of flat roof. Although partial views of the flat roof are possible from the west, the roof is not a traditional design element in the district. Its replacement with a more traditional pitched, tiled roof is an enhancement to the character and appearance of the Goring on Thames Conservation Area and reflects its wider character. The development accords with the objectives of Policy CON7.

6.35 Impact on the special landscape character of the AONB.

6.36 The site is screened nearly entirely by other buildings. The loss of the flat roof will result in a visual improvement in terms of including a more traditional element of design but the overall impact this will have on the wider landscape of the AONB is limited.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The principle of new housing in this central location within Goring is acceptable. The inclusion of first floor residential accommodation will not affect the viability of the A2 use on the ground floor. The lack of parking and private amenity space is offset by the proximity of open spaces, public car parks, public transport links and cycle provision. The inclusion of screens ensures that the level of overlooking of adjoining properties is reduced to an acceptable level and the distance and height of the new roof from the adjoining properties ensures that it will not be significantly overbearing or oppressive. The proposal accords with development plan policies.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 **Planning Permission is granted subject to the following conditions;**

- 1. Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
- 2. Planning condition listing the approved drawings**
- 3. Sample materials required (walls and roof)**
- 4. Cycle Parking Facilities**
- 5. Construction Traffic**
- 6. Retain screens**

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