

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 19 October 2016

Page

APPLICATION REF. NO:	16/00717/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	30 September 2016
WARD/PARISH:	PIERREMONT
LOCATION:	Central Borough Hotel, 12 Hopetown Lane
DESCRIPTION:	Conversion of former Central Borough Hotel and redevelopment incorporating 7 Farrer Street to form 8 No apartments and 2 No duplex dwellings to be used as serviced accommodation (Class C1) (description amended following receipt of additional information 25 September 2016)
APPLICANT:	RENNYCO LTD

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Planning permission is sought for the conversion, alteration and extension of the former Central Borough Hotel, its yard area to the west side and the adjoining property at 7 Farrer Street to provide 8 no. 2 bedroom apartments and 2 no. 2 bedroom dwellings. The proposed apartments and dwellings will be let as serviced accommodation (Use Class C1), managed on a 'meet and greet' basis with an off-site housekeeper responsible for the apartments and dwellings whilst occupied, similar to hotel accommodation.

The existing roof over the hotel will be replaced with a mansard-style roof of the same height incorporating dormer windows to facilitate the provision of accommodation within the roofspace. The external elevations of the hotel will remain largely unchanged, other than the replacement of the existing windows and doors with UPVc replacements and the hotel frontage will be retained. A 4.3 metre high brick boundary wall which currently encloses the yard to the east side of the hotel along its Farrer Street elevation will be demolished and a two storey extension built over the yard area. The extension, which will accommodate 4 apartments over two floors, is to measure approximately 9.5 metres wide at the front, increasing to 11.2 metres wide at the rear, with an overall depth of 11.5 metres. It will be constructed of white painted blockwork under a pitched slate roof, 9 metres in height. The 8 no. apartments will be provided within the former hotel and extension.

The former manager's accommodation at the southern end of the hotel will be converted to one of the 2 bedroom dwellings proposed within the scheme and the existing dwelling at 7 Farrer Street will be reconfigured to address the irregular shape of the eastern end of the dwelling relative to the existing yard and will continue to provide a 2 bedroom dwelling with alterations to the fenestration detailing to the front and rear. These dwellings will also be used as serviced accommodation.

A car parking area providing parking for 8 no. cars, including 1 no. disabled parking space, will be provided to the rear of the former yard and 7 Farrer Street, incorporating the yard to the rear of 7 Farrer Street. Cycle parking and bin storage will also be provided to the rear of the site.

The application property, the County Borough Hotel, is a vacant former public house located on the corner of Hopetown Lane and Farrer Street. The site is bound by residential properties either side and to the rear, although there are a number of commercial properties within the vicinity including a kitchen and bathroom showroom on the opposite side of Farrer Street. Hopetown Lane bounds the site to the east, beyond which lies Hopetown Carriage Works, a Grade II listed building, Darlington Railway Centre and Museum (Grade II*) and grounds and North Road Station.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no recent or relevant planning history.

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The following policies are relevant to consideration of the application:

Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011

- CS2 – Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design
- CS4 – Developer Contributions
- CS6 – Vibrant Cultural and Tourism Offer
- CS9 – District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services
- CS14 – Promoting Local Character and Distinctiveness
- CS16 – Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety

National Planning Policy Framework

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

Highway Engineer – (comments on amended description) Further to my previous correspondence it has since been confirmed by the applicant that it is intended that these flats will be offered and advertised as serviced accommodation to business people, contractors etc. or holiday stays on a daily, weekly or longer short term use where presently hotel/guest house accommodation is the only other option. It has been stated that the occupation figure of 60% is widely used for this type of accommodation to work financially although there will be times of course when full occupation will occur depending on local events, local contracts, seminars etc. It has also been stated that the flats will be offered for rent and will not be sold for individual ownership.

For a hotel use the design guidance states that 1 car parking space be provided per 2 bedrooms which would equate to 10 no. spaces. The site would be bookended by 2 no. 2 bed houses, one of which is an existing property and currently benefits from on street parking therefore there would be no change to the on street parking demand for No. 7 Farrer Street. The proposed dwelling house fronting onto Hopetown Lane would also rely on on-street parking to the front.

The remaining 8 no. units would be allocated a parking space in the rear yard which given the proximity to the Town Centre and benefitting from good public transport links would be deemed acceptable. Secure cycle parking should be provided for the development and further details should be provided, or a condition attached to a permission to provide further information relating to numbers and design/location. If the development can be restricted to serviced accommodation and based on the latest submitted information raise no highway objection.

Transport Policy – The site is well served by public transport and is close to an advisory cycle route on Widdowfield Street that connects to the wider cycle network around Darlington. Cycle parking should be provided in line with the Tees Valley Design Guide.

Environmental Health Officer (Contaminated Land) – Due to the likely age of the building the presence of asbestos and other hazardous materials cannot be ruled out. As such the site should be the subject of a hazardous materials survey and removal conducted by a suitably qualified and experienced hazardous materials contractor.

Environmental Health Officer (Pollution) – The development fronts directly onto Hopetown lane and is not set back from the street. I have concerns that the conversion to residential units would expose future residents to unacceptable levels of noise from traffic and potentially the railway line approximately 110 metres away to the north east of the site. Although it is proposed to upgrade the existing timber windows and doors to UPVc the plans do not include any details such as trickle vents to be installed which would allow future occupiers to ventilate their homes without having to open a window and expose themselves to noise. Recommend that conditions be attached requiring the submission of a scheme to protect the accommodation from excessive traffic/rail noise and also restricting the hours of construction activities.

Police Architectural Liaison Officer – Concern about the increased number of vehicles that 10 new households will attract, especially as it may not be particularly easy to access the parking court proposed for the rear of the properties. The parking court could also attract crime and should be well lit.

NWL – No comments to make.

Northern Gas Network – No objections.

Three letters of objection has been received which raise the following issues:

- *Too many flats overlooking me. I have had two people overlook my property and with this it will be twenty or more people;*
- *If all the residents have cars will be awful, there is no parking now;*
- *The pub will have three floors and all the other houses are terraced;*
- *The property is in the old part of town (one of the original pubs of the town) the third floor extension and the windows being vertical will not be in keeping with all the other properties in the street and could possibly block more light to our property;*
- *As for ten, 2-bed properties, no thought for the amount of new dwellings in a small area. The possibility of twenty extra cars and only seven bays at the rear, access to these are just about impossible via the rear lane;*
- *Already suffer frustration from not being able to successfully park near to our home, due to the commercial premises, bookmakers, public house, kitchen shop, Darlington*

locomotion heritage works and the restricted parking in St Anne's Terrace. The proposed new dwellings will only aggravate and compound our concerns.

- *If the proposed development is granted why not give the residents of Hopetown Lane the option of their own parking spaces, as granted in other congested areas of town. The road is wide enough for this to happen and may work well in conjunction with road calming measures;*
- *We have lived at the property for 25 years and have seen a decline in the footpaths outside and an increase in traffic using this route as a cross town corridor;*
- *This may not be the most affluent area of town though please consider local home owners and residents as you would if you had to cope with an increase of vehicles in your own streets without the addition of adequate space to do so.*

Re-consultation letters have been sent to all objectors in respect of the amended description. Any further responses received in will be reported verbally at the meeting.

A letter has been received from Councillor Bob Carson, Ward Councillor for Pierremont Ward, which raises the following issues:

- *Not been able to get inside the rear yard but its dimensions need checking. Access for car parking is going to be difficult even if the dimensions are correct. If not satisfactory this will lead to more on-street parking;*
- *Although the present roof of the Central Borough Hotel is higher than the houses on Farrer Street the style of the roof is comparable. What is proposed for the hotel building is not in keeping with adjacent buildings.*

PLANNING ISSUES

The following issues are relevant to consideration of the application:

- Planning Policy
- Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity
- Highway Safety
- Contamination

Planning Policy

Although the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and as such parts of these policies cannot be considered up to date, the Council's Interim Planning Statement (April 2016) states that most locations within the main urban area of Darlington are considered broadly acceptable for housing development, subject to consideration of other matters of development management. As the proposed units would be used as serviced accommodation, they would not be eligible for any contributions ordinarily sought under Core Strategy Policy CS4 (Developer Contributions) or the Planning Obligations SPD.

The proposal would result in the loss of a currently vacant former public house and Policy CS9 (District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services) seeks to protect and promote individual local shops, leisure uses and services which meet the day-to-day needs of nearby residents without relying on the private car. The public house has been closed since December 2012 and there are other public houses within close vicinity of the site, including the Builder's Arms and Hopetown & Whessoe Working Men's Club approximately 40 and 140 metres to the

north of the site respectively. In an accessible and sustainable location such as this, well served by other public houses and local shops and services, it is not considered that the loss of the public house would deprive the surrounding area of an essential service.

Visual Amenity

Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design) states that high quality, safe, sustainable and inclusive design will be promoted in all new developments. Policy CS14 (Promoting Local Character and Distinctiveness) seeks to protect, and where appropriate, enhance the distinctive character of the Borough's built, natural and environmental townscapes, landscapes and strong sense of place by protecting and improving the distinctive character of Darlington town centre and the urban area.

The existing building is a currently vacant public house within an otherwise residential frontage, and is one of a number of such examples within the vicinity of the application site. The building is an attractive feature in the streetscene and the frontage of the public house will be retained in the redevelopment of the site. It is proposed to construct a mansard-style roof over the public house. The roof would be no higher than the existing roof, which sits above the ridge heights of neighbouring properties, and the ridge line of properties gradually increases northwards along Hopetown Lane taking into account a slight change in levels. Although the pitch of the roof would be steeper, and would incorporate dormer windows, it is not considered that this would necessarily be harmful to the character and appearance of the application property or surrounding area so as to warrant refusal of the application on this basis.

The proposal will also repair a section of vacant street frontage onto Farrer Street by erecting an extension over the former dray yard between the public house and 7 Farrer Street, with the appearance of terraced properties infilling this gap. The existing dwelling at 7 Farrer Street, which is in a state of disrepair, will also be refurbished as part of the proposal. As such the proposed alterations and extensions to the application properties are considered to comply with the requirements of Policies CS2 and CS14.

Residential Amenity

Core Strategy Policy CS16 (Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety) states that new development, including proposals for the change of use of a building, should ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the environment, general amenity and the health and safety of the community.

The area surrounding the application site to its north, south and west sides is predominantly residential, although a kitchen and bathroom showroom and Indian takeaway are located on the opposite side of Farrer Street and Hopetown Carriage Works is located to the east on the opposite side of Hopetown Lane. The main issues in this instance is considered to be whether the proposed alterations and extensions are acceptable in terms of their impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residential properties in terms of loss of light, outlook or privacy and whether the proposed use of the properties as serviced accommodation is acceptable in this location due to any noise or disturbance generated by the coming and goings of residents to the units and parking area to the rear.

The proposed 2-storey extension to the side of the former public house will maintain a separation distance of approximately 20 metres from the rear of the extension to the rear of existing dwellings on Surtees Street to the south. While there will be some oblique overlooking of the rear of properties to the south, facing Hopetown Lane, from the first floor bedroom

windows in the rear of this extension this will not be so dissimilar to the present relationship between these properties and the rear of existing dwellings on Surtees Street. A first floor bedroom window in the rear of the existing public house, serving unit 6 has been redesigned to incorporate a pyramid style window directing views north-eastwards away from the rear of properties on Hopetown Lane towards the communal car parking area. Similarly, the proposed extension will maintain the existing relationship between properties on Farrer Street. In an area where there is a high degree of overlooking between properties it is not considered that the proposed development will exacerbate the existing situation to an unacceptable degree so as to warrant refusal on this basis.

As the extension is to infill a gap in existing street frontage it will not have any impact on neighbouring properties in terms of light or outlook.

A bin storage area is to be provided to the rear of the properties and there would be two small areas of communal space to the rear of units 1 and 5. The Environmental Health Officer has requested that conditions be attached requiring the submission of details of a scheme to protect the proposed units from excessive road traffic/rail noise and also to limit the hours of construction activities to protect the amenities of surrounding residential properties.

The use of the proposed dwellings and apartments as serviced accommodation will be similar in character to the properties being used as a private accommodation, albeit the properties will be used in a more transient way. It should be borne in mind however that the property could be re-opened and used as a public house (Use Class A4). There are also permitted changes within this use class to any use falling within Class A1 (shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services) and A3 (Restaurants and Cafes) and this would also be a material consideration. Furthermore, there would be no controls over opening hours of these particular uses. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposed use of the former public house as serviced accommodation would have any unacceptable impact on the amenities of surrounding residential properties.

The car parking area to the rear would be created in part of the rear yard the former public house and that of 7 Farrer Street, with access gained off Surtees Street. The rear lane is already accessible by vehicles with some properties having garages and rear parking areas accessible off the lane. While the Highway Engineer's comments will be considered elsewhere in this report, it is not considered that the use of this area as a small car park to serve the development will result in significant amounts of noise, nuisance and disturbance over and above that which already occurs in this area. Guests will be able to access some of the properties directly from the rear and a corridor is included to take guests to the front of the site for those properties that do not have direct access from the rear.

Highway Safety

The application proposes that 8 no. parking spaces, including 1 no. disabled parking space, will be provided to the rear of the property. Cycle storage is also to be provided within the site. The scope of the application has been amended in order to address the Highway Engineer's original concerns regarding a shortfall in parking provision, with the proposed dwellings/apartments being used as serviced accommodation. A total of 10 no. parking spaces would be required to serve the proposed development, to accord with the Tees Valley Design Guide.

The Highway Engineer advises that the site would be bookended by 2 no. 2 bed dwellings (to be used as serviced accommodation), one of which is an existing property and currently benefits from on street parking and therefore there would be no change to the on street parking demand

for No. 7. Unit 1 fronting onto Hopetown Lane would also rely on on-street parking to the front. The remaining 8 no. apartments would be allocated a parking space in the rear yard which given the proximity to the town centre and benefitting from good public transport links would be deemed acceptable. Subject to conditions to secure the provision of cycle parking on the site and to limit the accommodation to serviced accommodation, no highway objection is raised.

Contamination

The Council's Environmental Health Officer (Pollution) has requested that a condition be attached requiring the Council to be notified of any suspected contamination in the event that any is found.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The proposed development has been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. The proposed development does not give rise to crime and disorder issues.

CONCLUSION

The proposed change of use, alteration and extension of former Central Borough Hotel, its yard area to the west side and the adjoining property at 7 Farrer Street to provide 8 no. 2 bedroom apartments and 2 no. 2 bedroom dwellings to be used as serviced accommodation is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of the application site and surrounding area and upon the amenities of nearby residential properties. No highway objection has been raised to the proposal subject to a planning condition to restrict the accommodation to serviced accommodation only. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policies CS2 (Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design), CS9 (District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services), CS14 (Promoting Local Character and Distinctiveness) and CS16 (Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety) of the Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. A3 (Standard 3 year time limit)
2. B4 (Details of external materials to be submitted)
3. The accommodation hereby approved shall be used only as serviced accommodation falling within Use Class C1 and none of the dwellings or apartments hereby approved shall be occupied as a residential dwelling or dwellinghouse (Use Class C3).

REASON – The accommodation hereby approved is not considered suitable for permanent residential occupation in view of the shortfall in off-street parking provision and the lack of suitable outdoor amenity space.

4. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, a scheme to provide secure cycle parking on the site shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall not be occupied until the approved

details have been implemented in full and shall be retained for the duration of the development.

REASON – To encourage access to the site by sustainable modes of transport.

5. Prior to the development hereby approved being commenced, a scheme for the protecting the proposed residential accommodation from excessive traffic/rail noise shall be submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority. This shall include details of glazing specifications including sound reduction values (Rw value) and details of any trickle vents etc. to be installed. Any works which form part of such a scheme shall be completed prior to any part of the development being first occupied or used, and thereafter shall be retained and maintained for the life of the development.

REASON – To safeguard the amenities of residents of the serviced accommodation hereby approved.

6. Construction work, including deliveries to and the removal of material from the site, shall not take place outside the hours 08.00 – 18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 – 14.00 on a Saturday with no working on a Sunday and Bank/Public Holidays without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON – In the interests of residential amenity.

7. In the event that suspected contaminated material is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken, in accordance with best practice guidance, the details of which are to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority in advance. Where remediation is shown to be necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority in writing in advance.

REASON – To effectively deal with contamination in the event that any is found on the site.

8. B5 (Development in accordance with the approved plans)

INFORMATIVES

Prior to the commencement of the development the applicant is advised that contact be made with the Assistant Director – Highways, Design and Projects (contact Mrs P McGuckin 01325 406651)

In the event that development proposals include the importation of fill material or topsoil onto the site you are advised to contact the Environmental Health team for advice (01325 406437). In any event all imported materials should be sampled and analysed in accordance with YAHPAC (2014) guidelines to demonstrate that they are suitable for the proposed use and do not cause or contribute to the creation or proliferation of contaminated land.

THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN CONSIDERATION OF THE APPLICATION:

Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011

- CS2 – Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design
- CS4 – Developer Contributions
- CS9 – District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services
- CS10 – New Housing Development
- CS11 – Meeting Housing Needs
- CS14 – Promoting Local Character and Distinctiveness
- CS16 – Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety

Saved Policies of the Darlington Local Plan 1997

- Policy H18 (Houses in Multiple Occupation in Other Areas)

National Planning Policy Framework