# Former NatWest building set to be converted into new homes in Farnham



A former NatWest bank building in Farnham, Surrey, will be transformed into six new homes following the approval of a planning application by Waverley Borough Council. The plans, submitted by JBS Development Solutions, were passed despite concerns that the development could jeopardise the future of the neighbouring Borelli's wine bar and restaurant, which has been a staple of the local high street for 30 years.

The committee voted overwhelmingly in favour of the project with a result of ten votes in support, one against, and one abstention. The approval comes amid ongoing pressures for Waverley Borough Council to meet its housing requirements, which stand at 1,555 new dwellings per year. In contrast, the council estimates it can deliver only 1,998 homes in the next five years, leading to a policy where most developments are likely to receive approval unless they are in particularly sensitive areas or involve significant assets.

David Quick, the owner of Borelli's, joined the meeting via video link from France to voice his concerns. He highlighted the potential for increased noise complaints as the new homes would be built adjacent to his establishment. Quick described Borelli's as a “very popular busy music venue” on weekends, asserting, “The walls separating our restaurant with the proposed bedrooms in the former NatWest building would result in serious noise complaints whatever sound proofing measures were put in.” He warned that any restrictions imposed on his business could lead to its closure and a significant reduction in the value of his freehold.

In an effort to alleviate these concerns, Derek Copeland, representing the developer, spoke about the steps taken to ensure compatibility between the residential homes and the bar. He noted that modern insulation and the design of windows would adequately address noise issues. He claimed, “There is absolutely no intention to create a situation where (Borelli’s) is in any way threatened by would be complaints,” and suggested that the new residents could actually become additional customers for Borelli's, enhancing the local economy.

Councillor David Beaman, representing the Farnham Residents Group, acknowledged the concerns raised by Quick but emphasised the importance of adapting to the changing landscape of town centres, where a shift from retail to residential and hospitality developments is becoming increasingly common. He reassured Quick that the council would monitor the situation closely, saying, “I can understand the great concerns that David Quick has elaborated…but I think we have to take the word of the applicant that they have put in mitigating measures and that this will not lead to great fear.”

Councillor Graham White echoed these sentiments, expressing confidence in the protective measures proposed for Borelli's and recognising the bar's significance to the community. He stated, “It is a very important business to the town and it's something that we treasure.”

The approval of the housing project is expected to proceed, although a covenant restricting the land’s use to commercial development may create complications for the developers moving forward.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.farnhamherald.com/news/former-natwest-bank-building-in-farnham-could-be-converted-into-flats-746187> - This article reports on the planning application to convert the former NatWest bank in Farnham into homes, which aligns with the article's information about the project.
2. <https://www.jbs.limited/upcoming-project-natwest-bank-residential-conversion-central-farnham> - It details the plans for transforming the historic former NatWest Bank into a mix of commercial space, townhouses, and apartments, corroborating the article's description of the development.
3. <https://www.farnhamherald.com/news/all-change-farnhams-former-natwest-to-become-housing-despite-bar-owners-plea-783756> - This article mentions the approval of the conversion despite concerns from a neighbouring business owner, mirroring the article's account of Borelli's owner David Quick's concerns.
4. <https://www.jbs.limited/NATWEST-CONVERSION> - It provides additional details about the conversion project, emphasizing its central location in Farnham and the mix of commercial and residential uses, supporting the article's overview of the development.
5. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source is mentioned as providing the original story but does not offer specific corroborative content related to the NatWest development.
6. <https://planning360.waverley.gov.uk:4443/planning/> - This link leads to the Waverley council's planning portal, where details about the planning application for the NatWest building conversion would be available, further supporting the article's claims about council approval.
7. <https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/former-surrey-bank-turned-homes-31429484> - Please view link - unable to able to access data