

LLOYDS TSB

**CHANGE OF USE FROM A2 (FINANCIAL SERVICES) TO A3 (FOOD AND DRINK)
AT FORMER LLOYDS TSB PREMISES, 25 FORE STREET, TAUNTON.**

22690/24510

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the change of use of the former TSB premises (Use Class A2) to Use Class A3 which includes restaurants, pubs, snack bars, cafes, wine bars, and shops for sale of hot food. There are no proposals included for any external or internal works to the premises.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY from a highway point of view there is no objection to this proposal. AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY (Architectural Liaison Officer) no adverse comments to make at this stage regarding the development. AVON & SOMERSET CONSTABULARY (Town Centre Sergeant) police policy is that all applications within the town centre for A3 should be challenged at least to restrict the hours of opening to 11 p.m. at the least; increase in the late night premises are the cause of the increase in violence that has been experienced in the town centre; these applications must not go through without hearing police objections and we seek the committees support and help in preventing the increase in public violence in the Town Centre.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER (NOISE & POLLUTION) conditions should be imposed with regards to odours from cooking and noise from any air extraction equipment. CONSERVATION OFFICER my concerns relate to the potential changes to the building to implement the use if approved; concerns include: signs, means of escape, ventilation for public areas/kitchen etc; and use of upper floors. TOWN CENTRE MANAGER realised that on planning grounds it is not possible for the Planning Authority to reject this application as market forces have to prevail; understand that the building as it stands is a challenge to market as it has limited rear access for retail and other uses; would however register my concerns and those of Taunton Town Centre Partnership at the proposal to open another late night licensed premises in this part of town ; potential for policing all these establishments could prove problematic; evidence that sections of the public already feel excluded from the late night economy in Taunton and another late licensed premises will add to this; danger of reducing the diversity of building use on this key strategic site; building is an important element of Taunton's architecture and it would be regrettable in my view for its use to be limited to that of a licensed bar.

TAUNTON AND DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY is of the same opinion as the Town Centre manager and would like to register our objection to this proposal. TAUNTON DEANE LICENSED VICTUALLERS ASSOCIATION the area is already over provided with

licensed establishments; sooner rather than later some of them would be forced to close their doors as there is not an infinite number of customers in the Taunton area, and we would then have a town centre with closed and unsightly buildings; the local Police only have limited resources to deal with an already overcrowded workload on a weekend; using more Police within the town centre merely means that other areas are not being properly policed.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy 21 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review states that Town and Rural Centres will be the primary focal points of new facilities including entertainment. It points out that consideration should be given to the impact that the development might have on the vitality and viability of the existing Centre.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy S1- the proposal meets all the criteria of the policy. Policy EN18 of the same plan states that the change of use, alteration conversion or extension of a Listed Building will not be permitted unless it meets certain criteria. The proposed change of use is considered to meet these criteria. Policy T33 of the plan covers the diversity in Taunton Town Centre and states that "proposals which complement the existing range of shopping facilities and create diversity and interest in the town centre will be permitted. Such uses include restaurant, cafes, public houses, leisure and arts facilities".

A Ministerial Statement (DETR) issued in February 1999 regarding PPG6 states that "proposals for new retail and leisure development which accord with an up-to-date plan strategy or are proposed on sites within an existing centre, should not be required to demonstrate that they satisfy the test of need because this should have been taken into account in the development plan". Whilst not strictly a leisure use, the A3 use proposed is considered to fall within the general terms of this advice.

ASSESSMENT

The building is situated within a prominent location within the town centre on the corner of Corporation Street and Fore Street, and is a Grade 2 listed building. The former bank has been vacant for approximately 2 years and the applicant has indicated that due to the restricted window frontage and its listed building status, there has been little interest from potential occupants for retail use or financial services. This is accepted by the Planning Officer, as given the layout and frontage of the building, and its listed status, any major alterations internally or externally would be likely to be unacceptable. The change of use to an A3 use would usually involve less changes needed to the appearance of the building, and would be able to fit in with the existing building better without compromising the needs of the occupier. The proposed use of the building is considered acceptable in this town centre location, in policy terms. The main objections received are based on the perceived over supply of this type of use within the town centre, and the problems that are encountered with unsocial behaviour from some people using these establishments. Although the perceived public disorder problems need to be taken into consideration when determining the application, there is no clear indication that the granting of the A3 use for this premises will significantly increase the

problem to such an extent as to warrant refusal of the application. These perceived problems are not considered to be under the direct control of planning regulations, and would be addressed by other legislation such as licensing and policing.

It is felt that the use of the building would be acceptable as Class A3, and would not be incompatible with the town centre location, and therefore in planning terms the proposal is considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to the conditions of time limit, odours arising from cooking, noise from extractor system. Notes re food safety regulations, registration with Environmental Health, further applications needed for alterations to building.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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NOTES: