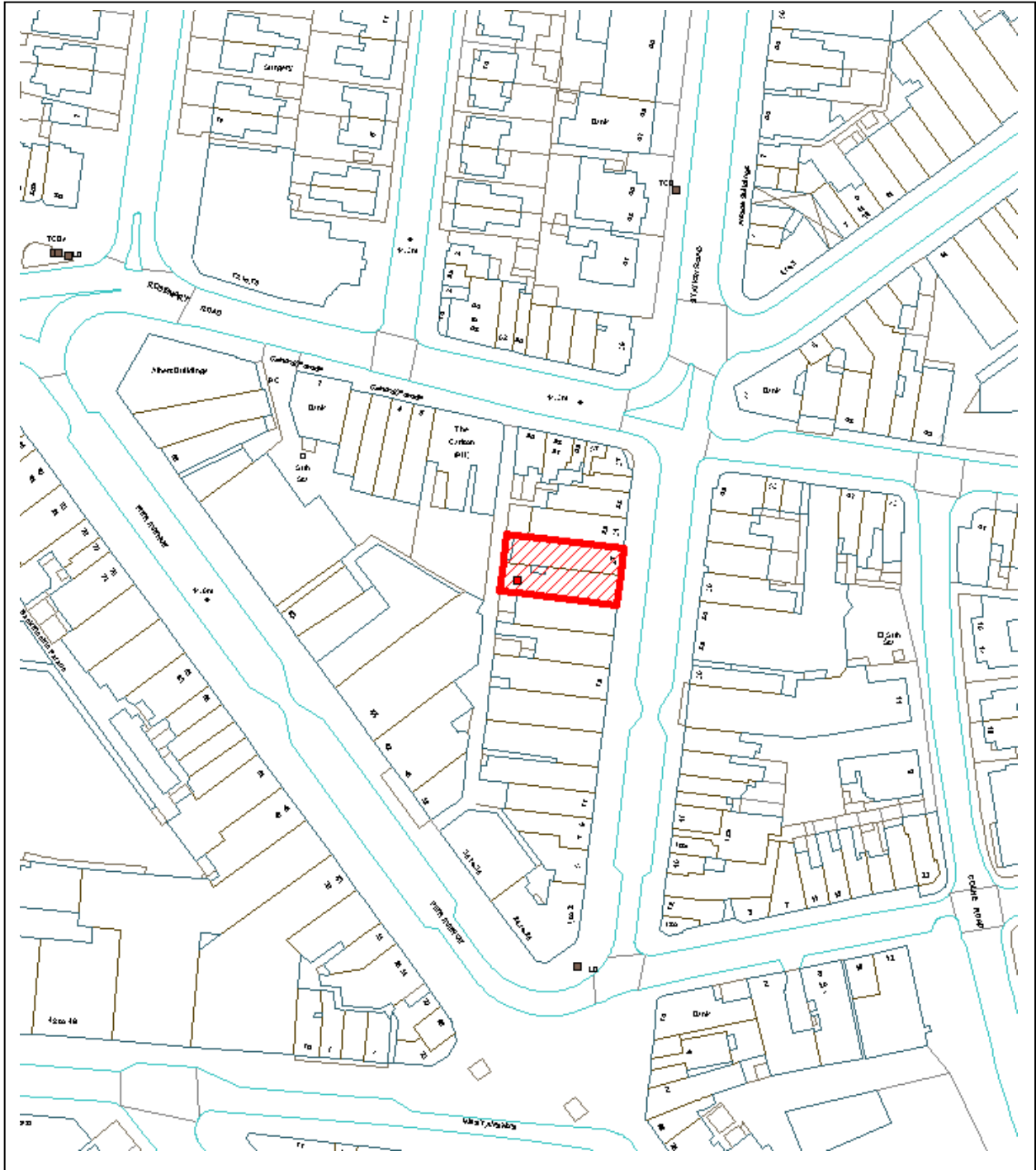


PLANNING COMMITTEE

28 JUNE 2011

REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY HEAD OF PLANNING

A.8 PLANNING APPLICATION - 11/00417/FUL - 25 - 27 STATION ROAD, CLACTON ON SEA



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Application:	11/00417/FUL	Town / Parish: Clacton Non Parished
Applicant:	Barclays Bank PLC	
Address:	25 - 27 Station Road Clacton On Sea	
Development:	Change of use to Class A2 (financial and professional services) of No. 25 Station Road to form an extension to the existing bank branch at No. 27 Station Road. Alterations to front elevations of both Nos. 25 and 27 to replace the shopfronts and reinstate windows at first floor.	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This application is to be determined by the Planning Committee as the recommendation is a departure from the Development Plan. The proposal is in conflict with Policy ER32a and ER33 as it proposes an A2 use within a Primary Shopping Area.
- 1.2 The officer recommendation is for an approval on the basis that there are material considerations that outweigh Development Plan policy.

Recommendation: Approve

Conditions:

- Time Limit.
- Approved Plans.

Reason for approval:

This application is in conflict with the Development Plan. However, the following material considerations in combination outweigh the Development Plan:

- Policies in PPS4 and draft Core Strategy.
- Needs of applicant.
- Unsuccessful marketing.
- Better access for disabled.
- Improved bank facilities.
- Additional employment.

2. Planning Policy

National Policy:

PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

Local Plan Policy:

ER32a Primary Shopping Area

ER33 Non-Retail Uses Within Primary Shopping Frontages

Core Strategy and Development Policies Proposed Submission Draft:

DP9 Development in Defined Centres

3. Consultations

Regeneration – cannot support loss of an A1 unit within Primary Shopping Frontage.

4. Assessment

The main planning considerations are:

- Development Plan; and,
- Other Material Considerations.

Development Plan.

- 4.1 The application site is located within the Primary Shopping Area of Clacton as defined by the adopted Tendring District Local Plan (2007). Therefore, Policy ER32a is of primary relevance stating that, within this area proposals for non retail development at ground floor will not be permitted. Policy ER33 details the exceptions for allowing non retail uses within Primary Shopping Frontages stating development will only be permitted where non A1 uses would not detract from the core objective of providing retail outlets for the shopper.
- 4.2 The application proposes an A2 use within a Primary Shopping Frontage area resulting in a loss of an A1 retail unit where the proportion of frontage in A2 – A5 use already exceeds the 10% threshold specified in the policy being 34%. In terms of shopping frontage, this will increase the number of non-retail units in this length of individual street frontage from 4 to 5 out of a total of 16. The percentage of the street frontage not in retail use will increase from 34% to 39%.
- 4.3 The application is therefore in conflict with the Development Plan.

Other Material Considerations.

- 4.4 In view of this conflict with the Development Plan all other material considerations need to be addressed to see if they outweigh the Development Plan.
- 4.5 The application site is located in the town centre of Clacton and consists of numbers 25 and 27 Station Road. 27 Station Road is an existing Barclays Bank branch (formally The Woolwich). Number 25 is a vacant shop unit next door (formerly occupied by Nisa). The Bank also has an existing branch at number 44 Station Road. Number 27 is a narrow unit with no customer areas on the upper floors. Number 44 is an older style building on the corner of High Street and Rosemary Road accessed by stairs or access ramp. Although some accommodation exists on the first floor of this branch, its use is restricted as there is no scope to provide a lift.
- 4.6 Limitations within the existing accommodation make it difficult for Barclays to make available the level of service and type of quality presentation that customers expect. It is not possible to address these deficiencies in the confines of either of the existing branches. As both existing branches are within the Primary Shopping Frontage expanding either branch would raise the same policy issues and problems. However, a leading financial services retailer such as Barclays needs to be located within a core shopping area.
- 4.7 Number 25 Station Road has been vacant for over 12 months. Details have been provided of the terms of marketing undertaken since late 2009 with no success.

- 4.8 Although no formal marketing of 44 Station Road has been undertaken, details have also been provided regarding the interest expressed by one of the national chains of coffee retailers in acquiring the existing premises at number 44 Station Road should this application be approved and the building become vacant. It is understood that Barclays have a 15 year lease on this building so there is a financial pressure on them to find a tenant.
- 4.9 Planning Policy Statement 4 Policy EC10 states that local planning authorities should adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic development. Planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably. Furthermore, Policy DP9 of the Core Strategy and Development Policies Proposed Submission Draft states that development will be expected to provide an appropriate mix of 'town centre uses' within active street frontages at ground floor level. Both of these policies support the present application.
- 4.10 Extending into number 25 Station Road will consolidate both existing branches resulting in improved facilities and improved customer access, including disabled access, bringing a vacant unit into use. This will lead to increasing levels of visitation attracting shoppers and helping pedestrian flows to the benefit of surrounding traders enhancing vitality and viability. Furthermore, the proposal will safeguard existing jobs and create additional employment of one post.
- 4.11 The Development Plan does define a large part of the town centre as primary shopping frontage. It is only Pier Avenue that really meets the 10% threshold identified in the policy. The Clacton Action Area Plan will in due course need to address this issue of the extent of the primary shopping frontage.
- 4.12 Members will need to judge whether the material considerations are sufficient to outweigh the conflict with the Development Plan. Your officer advice is that in combination these considerations do justify a departure from the Development Plan.

Background Papers

None