

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

**Report by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and
Environmental Services**

Planning Committee: 7 June 2006

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER: DC06-070

PROPOSAL: Sub-division and part change of use of retail unit to bookmakers including alterations to shopfront

SITE: 53 Sylvania Way South
Clydebank

APPLICANT: Betfred

AGENT: McInally Associates
6 Newton Place
Glasgow
G3 7PR

WARD: 2

DATE REGISTERED: 17/03/06

PUBLICITY: FORMDROPDOWN

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Neighbour Notification	30/03/06	13/04/06	Clydebank Post
Bad Neighbour Development	18/05/06	01/06/06	Clydebank Post
Contrary to Development plan	30/03/06	20/04/06	Clydebank Post

REPORT:

A. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is the former Your More Store located at the north end of Sylvania Way South adjacent to Three Queens Square. The premises have been vacant since November 2004 and the retail use had occupied both the ground and upper floor of the building. The site is adjacent to a vacant retail unit that was occupied by Poundstretcher until recently.

B. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

Permission is sought to subdivide equally the ground floor of the unit to form a bookmakers with the other half of the ground floor remaining in retail use. The upper floor of the building would also remain in retail use and would be accessed from the ground floor of the retail unit. At this time a tenant has not been identified for this retail unit.

In addition, alterations would be carried out to the shopfront to create two separate shopfronts. Each shopfront would have a centrally positioned recessed door, flanked by windows on either side.

Details of any external roller shutters, satellite dishes or fascia signs have not been supplied at this time. The installation of these items would require separate planning consents.

C. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Guideline 8 sets out the Government's policy for town centres and retail developments. It also addresses other non-retailing uses which have a role in contributing to the economic health and enhancement of town centres. The broad policy objectives are to sustain and enhance the vitality and design quality of town centres as the most appropriate location for retailing and other related activities. Town Centres should be the principal location for retailing however other uses, particularly residential, leisure and recreational uses and, where appropriate, tourism can bring life into the town centre throughout the day and evening.

Local Plan Policy

The site is identified in the Clydebank Local Plan as being within the town centre. Policy CD1 aims to maintain the vitality and viability of the town centre by directing all significant retail proposals to the town centre. Policy CD3 seeks to protect and enhance the retail and commercial function of the Clyde Shopping Centre by encouraging and improving existing retail floorspace and supporting the establishment of new retail uses where appropriate. Changes of use to a non-retail use will be permitted provided it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that such changes would reinforce and revitalise the centre and would also not adversely affect the character and amenity of the area.

D. CONSULTATIONS

Town Centres Initiative:	No observations
British Airports Authority:	Awaiting response

E. REPRESENTATIONS

Two letters of objection have been received to the application. The first objection is from a resident of Hardgate who considers that there are sufficient bookmakers within Clydebanks and the proposed bookmakers would not enhance the area. In addition this objector considers that the proposed bookmakers will attract more “undesirables” who already congregate in the area.

The second objection has been submitted by Richard Raper Planning Consultants on behalf of an unnamed occupant of commercial premises in Sylvania Way South. The grounds of objection indicate that the proposal is contrary to policy as it is located within a core retail area; the proposal would adversely affect the retail character of the area; there is already a concentration of non-retail uses with a Ladbrokes betting office nearby; approval would set a dangerous precedent.

F. ASSESSMENT

Land Use Policy

The site is located within Clydebanks town centre and the principal uses within the town centre are retailing. It is recognised that the retention and expansion of retail facilities is the basis for the success of most town centres. However the town centre supports non-retail uses and Sylvania Way South in particular is characterised by a variety of uses. The other uses includes banks, opticians, bookmakers, indoor markets (which in themselves have a variety of uses) and pawnbrokers.

The applicant’s agent has indicated that the premises have been unoccupied since November 2004 and there has not been any serious interest from retail users. It has been indicated that the only other serious interest has been to use the premises as a public house. The landlord has agreed to lease the premises to Betfred on the basis that the remainder will be let to a retail use.

The application site has been unoccupied for an extended period, as have the neighbouring premises. As long as the premises remain unoccupied they do little to contribute to the amenity or vitality of this part of the town centre. The proposed bookmakers would only occupy part of the premises with the remainder being retained for retail use. It is therefore considered that the use of part of the premises as a bookmakers will not have a significant effect on the overall retail function of the town centre and would be an acceptable use at this location.

It is also considered that its position within the building is acceptable as it would not be directly adjacent to the public square between the building and the canal.

The proposed alterations to the shopfronts would be in a relatively straightforward and simplified style, creating large areas of glazing. The new shopfronts would not be dissimilar to other shopfronts along Sylvania Way South and would be considered an acceptable design at this location.

Other Material Considerations – Airport Safeguarding

The British Airports Authority has been consulted on this application as the site is within the consultation zone for Glasgow Airport. At this time their response has not been received, however it is not considered that the proposed use will cause concern.

Other Material Considerations – Representations

An assessment of the proposal has been made above and it is considered that this would be an acceptable development at this location. One of the objectors considers that the proposed bookmakers will attract undesirables who already congregate in the area. It is not considered that the proposed bookmakers would result in anti social behaviour.

The other objector has indicated that approval of this use would create an undesirable precedent. Any planning applications submitted in the future for changes of use away from retail use at this locality will be assessed against the development plan and government guidance at that time.

G. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The application has been assessed against the development plan and government guidance as well as other material planning considerations. The proposed use will result in the change of use of part of an existing retail use to a non-retail use, however it is not considered that this would have a significant impact on the retail function of the overall town centre. The re use of this vacant premises will contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre. **It is recommended that planning permission be approved subject to the following condition.**

H. CONDITIONS

1. **The development hereby permitted shall commence within a period of 5 years from the date of this permission.**

David McMillan
Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services
Date: 16 May 2006

Wards affected: 2

Background Papers:

1. Copy of planning application received 08/03/06.
2. Copy of consultation response from Town Centre Initiatives.
3. Copy of letter of objection from resident of 87 Antonine Gardens received 05/04/06.
4. Copy of letter of objection from Richard Raper Planning Consultants received 06/04/06.
5. Copy of letters from agents received 08/03/06 and 03/04/06.

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