

MC/21/0969

Date Received: 6 April 2021
Location: Visitor Centre 95 High Street
Rochester Medway
Proposal: Installation of an ATM to recessed front elevation
Applicant Euronet Worldwide
Mrs Alix Knapman
Agent Des Ager Planning Consultant
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Ward: Rochester West Ward
Case Officer: Dylan Campbell
Contact Number: 01634 331700

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 23rd June 2021.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
Drawing numbers: EN010920D REV B, EN010920P2 and EN Signage Rev A, received 6 April 2021.
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 The ATM shall not be brought into use until the details showing ATM Arra Loktec Anti Ram Raid anchoring system (V1.9 dated 10 December 2018), defensible space ground markings on drawing number EN010920D Rev B, the dedicated white dome Genie NVR Blakes Security CCTV camera Ref H.264 8/16/32, Diebold Nixdorf ATM security mirror and upgraded LED fitting received 6 April 2021 have been installed in accordance with the submitted details. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be maintained.

Reason: In the interest of crime prevention and community safety; and to ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual amenity in the locality, in accordance with Policies BNE1, BNE8 and BNE14 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

This proposal is for the installation of an ATM to the recessed front elevation of the Visitor Information Centre located at 95 High Street Rochester to provide 24-hour banking facilities for customers to facilities/services and shops in Rochester High Street, as well as residents in the immediate area.

The ATM is proposed to be installed to the right of the recessed glazed shop front through the existing white infill panel. The ATM is of a standard design and is to be set at a height of approx. 700mm from ground and would measure approx. 1109mm in height and approx. 548mm in width. The ATM would comprise an acrylic standard NCR signage panel, which would be non-illuminated and fitted with Euronet ATM signage with blue lettering "ATM" out of a white background.

Relevant Planning History

MC/21/0274	Details pursuant to condition 3 (Installation of Security facilities) on planning application MC/20/2471 For the Installation of an ATM to recessed front elevation Decision: Withdrawn Decided: 23 March 2021
MC/20/2471	Installation of an ATM to recessed front elevation Decision: Approval with Condition Decided: 14 January 2021
MC/20/2472	Advertisement consent for an Illuminated ATM Fascia sign Decision: Approval with Conditions Decided: 14 January 2021

Representations

The application has been advertised on site and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties. Kent Police have also been consulted.

Kent Police appreciate the need and reasoning for the ATM, however, they have concerns regarding the final location of the ATM from a safety and security standpoint. On the previously approved application (MC/20/2471) they recommended the installation of the additional items listed by Euronet. In relation to this application Kent Police have objected to the ATM within the recessed area from a user safety aspect.

Two letters of objection have been received raising the following concerns:

- Loitering near proposed ATM
- Noise and disturbance to occupier of the Six Poor Travellers' House
- Damage to the Six Poor Travellers' House

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and are considered to conform.

Planning Appraisal

Background

Planning permission was granted on 14 January 2021 (MC/20/2471) for the installation of an ATM to recessed front elevation. This permission included a condition relating to the installation of anti-ram raid bollards. It has since come to light that that the bollards cannot be installed due to the extent of the basement below the location of the approved ATM. This application therefore proposes the installation of an ATM Arra Loktec Anti Ram Raid anchoring system which would be fitted to the basement floor.

Principle

The Visitors Information Centre is located within Rochester Town Centre core retail area as defined by Policy R8 of the Local Plan. This Policy seeks to promote appropriate uses, provided they support the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole; and which are compatible with the specialist and tourism character of the centre or cater to day to day needs of local residential population. Paragraphs 80 and 85 of the NPPF seeks to ensure the vitality of town centres and states that decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt.

The need for a fully serviced free to use ATM is due to the closure of major High Street Banks. Rochester Centre has no 'Bank' presence on the High Street and the only other location for residents and visitors to undertake free cash withdrawals is an over-

the-counter service at the Post Office, which does not provide a 24-hour service. Rochester attracts approx. 220,000 visitors per annum, with the Visitors Centre located in a location which experiences significant footfall, making it an ideal location for an ATM. The ATM would provide an additional service to residents, patrons and businesses of Rochester Town Centre; and subject to further consideration regarding its design and siting in the Conservation Area and setting of a Listed Building (see below), no objection is raised to the principle of the application, in accordance with Policies R8 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 80 and 85 of the NPPF.

Design and Heritage

Paragraphs 124 and 127 of the NPPF emphasise the importance of good design and Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan states that development should be satisfactory in terms of scale and mass and should respect the visual amenity of the surrounding area. Policy BNE12 of the Local Plan states that special attention will be paid to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, as defined on the proposals map. Policy BNE14 of the Local Plan states that development within conservation areas should achieve high quality design which will preserve or enhance the areas historical/architectural character/ appearance following the criteria set out in the Local Plan. Additionally, paragraph 192 of the NPPF outlines the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; and the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality.

95 High Street makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and therefore is considered a non-designated heritage asset, which requires appropriate consideration to ensure that any harm to heritage assets is minimised and justified by the proposed development as per section 16 of the NPPF and the appropriate Policy BNE14 of the Local Plan.

The proposal would be located within the Historic Rochester Conservation Area adjacent to a Grade I Listed Building - Six Poor Travellers House. The application site is not listed and there is little information about the site until the Georgian era (1714-1830). Over time the front of the building has been replaced a number of times as ownership changed hands. In 1993 the former local authority Rochester upon Medway City Council took over the building and opened Rochester's Visitor Information Centre. The French Hospital bought the building from Medway Council in 2012 and today Medway Council continue to run the Visitor Information Centre from the ground floor, whilst the top two floors are now occupied by the Huguenot Museum.

The submitted Heritage Statement outlines the need for the ATM within Rochester centre. It goes on to state that the ATM would be located to the right hand-side recess when facing the building. This area once housed an out-of-hours tourist information screen. The screen was in use from 1997 until early 2000 and removed when the Visitor Information Centre upgraded the till system thus making the facility redundant. This location was boarded over once the touchscreen was removed from service and this area is still visible.

It is considered that the Visitors Centre is the logical and least harmful location for an ATM in the Town Centre. Given that it would be sited in an existing boarded enclosure, there would be no need to alter the existing shop front and the ATM would be installed without an illuminated signage/surround in line with the adopted 'Guide to shopfront advertising for historic buildings' (dated September 2015).

It is considered that the ATM and non-illuminated signage would not have a significant impact on the character of 95 High Street, the Conservation Area and to the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings, in accordance with Policies BNE12, BNE14, BNE15 and BNE18 of the Local Plan of paragraphs 189, 190, 194 and 196 of the NPPF.

Amenity

Given the nature of the proposal, it is considered that the ATM would not result in a detrimental impact to neighbouring residential amenities in terms of a loss of daylight, sunlight, outlook or privacy in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan and paragraph 127f of the NPPF.

Security

The preamble to Policy BNE8 of the Local Plan states that development should seek to 'reduce risk of ram-raiding' by the appropriate siting and design of street furniture and 'provide adequate lighting and incorporate security measures'. Furthermore, it states that the design and layout of the development should seek to maximise personal safety and security of property. The ATM location is overlooked by nearby residents living above neighbouring shops and restaurants. 95 High Street Rochester has monitored CCTV management by Medway Public Services Ltd and is viewed by passing public vehicles on this section of the High Street. However, concerns have been raised regarding the safety and security of users, given the siting of the ATM in this recessed area and partly obscured from view. Additionally, concerns regarding noise and disturbance and damage to the Six Poor Travellers' House have been received during the consultation process. To help mitigate against the possible negative elements of an ATM in this location the applicants have proposed dedicated CCTV camera in combination with the existing CCTV on the building, upgraded LED lighting to brighten the area and make it as visible as possible, ATM security mirrors, Anti-Ram Raid anchoring system and defensible space ground markings around the ATM. A condition is recommended to ensure that the development is not be brought into use until these elements have been installed and that they are maintained.

It is considered that these security features would mitigate against any concerns regarding possible loitering, anti-social behaviour or noise and disturbance in relation to the proposed ATM and when balanced against the need for the ATM would provide an additional service to residents, patrons and businesses of Rochester Town Centre which would be beneficial to the town centre as a whole. Additionally, it is considered that this location would be the most appropriate and least harmful from a heritage viewpoint. Subject to condition, it is considered that the application is in accordance with Policy BNE8 of the Local Plan and paragraph 127f of the NPPF.

Highways

The ATM is sited in such a position as it will be unlikely to cause highway issues. As such it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Policy T1 of the Local Plan.

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval

It is considered that the proposal would not impact on the character or appearance of the existing building, Conservation Area or setting of the nearby Listed Building, neighbouring amenities, or highways. The proposed security features would mitigate against concerns raised and when balanced against the benefits of the proposal is considered the most appropriate location for an ATM. The proposal is in accordance with Policies BNE1, BNE2, BNE8, BNE12, BNE14, BNE15 BNE18, R8 and T1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003 and paragraphs 80, 85, 109, 124, 127, 127f, 189, 190, 194 and 196 of the NPPF.

The application would normally be determined under delegated powers but is being referred for Committee determination due to the number of representations received expressing a view contrary to officer's recommendation for approval with Conditions.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection on Medway Council's Website <https://publicaccess1.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>