



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report

### ABP-307150-20

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<b>Development</b>	Installation of an ATM machine in window space of existing shop front to the south elevation.
<b>Location</b>	An File, The Octagon, Westport, Co Mayo
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Mayo County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	2032
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	Euronet 360 Finance Ltd.
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Refuse Permission
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	First Party V. Refusal
<b>Appellant(s)</b>	Euronet 360 Finance Ltd.
<b>Observer(s)</b>	None
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2020
<b>Inspector</b>	Máire Daly

## 1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located on the northern side of the Octagon in Westport town centre. The structure is comprised of a terraced five-bay two-storey house, dating from 1799, on a cranked L-shaped plan with single-bay two-storey side (east) elevation. The structure has been renovated with replacement shopfronts inserted to ground floor.
- 1.2. The proposed development is for permission to install an ATM facility within the current glazed window opening below the 'Bar' signage on the existing southern elevation of the bar premises. The site which measures .016ha is located on the north-eastern corner site, facing onto the Glendinning Monument which is a protected structure (Ref . no. 054) located in the centre of the Octagon. The existing premises on site is public house/bar known as An File.
- 1.3. The site is located within the Westport Town Centre Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). The ACA is in essence the 18th century planned urban core of Westport. The proposal is on a structure that is recorded on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) Reg. no. 31212084. The site has a wide footpath outside of it, fronting onto the central octagon area, this area appears to be used occasionally for outdoor seating.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development is to comprise:
  - Installation of an ATM machine (measuring width 0.55m X breadth 1.1m X height 1.05m) into the existing shopfront window (western half of window) on the southern elevation of the building.
  - Access to the rear of the ATM will be provided from the public house.
  - No alterations are proposed to the main external joinery or shopfront.

## 3.0 Planning Authority Decision

### 3.1. Decision

Permission was refused for the following reason:

1. *The proposed development, by reason of its appearance and design, would materially and adversely affect the character of the Westport Architectural Conservation Area, and would seriously injure the amenities or depreciate the value of property in the vicinity. The proposed development, therefore, would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*

### 3.2. Planning Authority Reports

#### 3.2.1. Planning Report

The recommendation to refuse permission in the Area Planner's Report reflects the decision of the Planning Authority. The main points are outlined as follows:

- The proposed development is poorly depicted and sited without due regard to the sensitive core area within the ACA.
- No preplanning consultation was arranged as required under the Westport Town & Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (as varied).
- No Architectural Assessment was submitted for consideration with the application. Given its location within an ACA this would be required.

#### 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Water Services, Mayo County Council (MCC) – No response received.
- Area Engineer, Westport, MCC – No response received.
- Noelle Angley, Architects Section, MCC – No response received.

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

None.

### 3.4. Third Party Observations

None.

## 4.0 Planning History

None relevant to site.

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. National Guidance

#### 5.1.1. Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities

New items fixed to the exterior of the building (Page 134)

- Section 8.5.8 – New items should not detract from the appearance of the character of an ACA.
- Section 8.5.9 – ATMS, where their installation is permitted should be accommodated within existing openings wherever possible.

### 5.2. Development Plan

#### 5.2.1. Zoning

The operative development plan is the Westport Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (as varied).

The subject site is zoned 'B Town Centre' - *The objective of the Town Centre land use is to provide for and improve commercial and other town centre activities and to preserve and enhance the civic and town centre character of the town.*

#### 5.2.2. Section 4 - Town Function

**Objective TFO-02** - It is an objective of the Council to encourage the sustainable development of industrial and services activity which is compatible with the urban form of Westport.

#### 5.2.3. Section 4 - Townscape and Conservation of the Built Environment

**Policy TP-01** - It is the policy of the Council to maintain, conserve and protect the architectural quality, character and scale of the town.

**Objective TO-01** - It is an objective of the Council to protect the town centre by ensuring all new development is compatible with the existing character and visual amenity of Westport.

**Objective TO-02** – New developments shall support the architectural integrity, quality and character of such areas (ACAs).

**Objective TO-012** - It is an objective of the Council to encourage a high standard of architectural design and layout in all developments

#### 5.2.4. **Appendix 1 – Built heritage**

##### Section 2 - Architectural Conservation Area – Westport Town Centre

- The urban and commercial core of this ACA is 'enclosed' by three important civic Spaces, one of which is the Octagon and is detailed in the Plan as follows:

- *The Octagon a formal civic space surrounding the 'Glendenning' monument construct of Portland stone.*

Proposals for development in any ACA that involve a new building, reuse or change of use and extensions will be required to:

- Conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the ACA
- Respect the scale, massing, proportions, design and materials of existing Structures
- Retain important exterior architectural features that contribute to the character and appearance of the ACA

Developers/applicants should engage in pre-planning consultation with Westport Town Council prior to the submission of any planning applications in the ACA.

#### 5.3. **Natural Heritage Designations**

None relevant.

## 6.0 The Appeal

### 6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The grounds of appeal, as raised in the submission from KRA Visionary Project Partners, on behalf of the first party appellant and can be summarised as follows:

- The proposed installation would have no impact on the existing shop front. The existing shop front has been changed several times within the last decade as evidenced on Google street view and the NIAH record.
- The proposed ATM is to be installed within the glazing only and will have no impact on the window frame or wall on the subject site.
- The applicant has submitted revised proposals with the appeal which could be implemented if necessary, to further minimise the impact on the ACA. These proposed alterations include:
  - the removal of the blue background screening (additional Mullion) of the coated metal panel bordering the ATM frames and its replacement with clear glazing. Therefore, the clear window glazing would be simply cut to allow the installation of the ATM.
  - Alteration to the branding/colour scheme of the proposed installation to suit the local environment
- There will be no other impact on any other part of the existing shop front façade.
- The applicants feel there is a demonstratable need for an ATM service within this area to accommodate the local businesses and tourist footfall.
- No submissions or observations were received from local retailers in opposition to the proposal.
- The existing design of the shopfront as stated in the NIAH appraisal is not original and is very much modified at street level.

## 6.2. Planning Authority Response

- None

## 6.3. Observations

- None

## 7.0 Assessment

7.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, inspected the site and having regard to relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the main issues in this appeal are as follows:

- Principle of Development within the ACA
- Appropriate Assessment

### 7.2. Principle of Development within the ACA

7.2.1. The building, the subject of this appeal is not a Protected Structure, however it is located within the 'Westport Town Centre ACA'. Policy TP-01 of the Plan states '*It is the policy of the Council to maintain, conserve and protect the architectural quality, character and scale of the town*', more specially Objectives TO-01 states that '*all new development is compatible with the existing character and visual amenity of Westport*'. The ATM is proposed within the Town Centre ACA, and more importantly within the Octagon area, a well-established historical focal point in Westport town. The ATM if permitted would front onto the 'Glendenning Monument' which is a protected structure (Ref. no. 054) and provides a central point within the surrounding civic space.

7.2.2. The appeal site is listed on the NIAH (Reg. no. 31212084), constructed in 1799 and is stated as representing an integral component of the late eighteenth-century domestic built heritage of Westport. The NIAH appraisal states '*Although much modified at street level, the elementary form and massing otherwise survive intact together with quantities of the historic or original fabric, thereby upholding much of the character or integrity of a house making a pleasing visual statement in The*

*Octagon*'. The appellant argues that the level of intervention proposed is minimal, in that only the glazed element of the shopfront will be affected, and reference is made to the numerous modifications to the shopfront of the subject site over the past decade as evidenced in the appeal statement.

7.2.3. The applicant has proposed two changes to the original proposal which seeks to reduce the visual impact of the ATM on the surrounding historical area. The first is to eliminate the need for subdivision of the window by removing the additional mullion and eliminating the need for the coated metal panel to the surrounds of the ATM, instead the ATM machine is to be set into the window and surrounded by the clear glazing of the window pane itself. Secondly the applicant proposes amending the branding/colour scheme of the proposed installation as required to take into account the surrounding environment.

7.2.4. Although acknowledged that there have been several modifications to the front of the structure over time, I would have to agree with the Area Planner in that the proposal, even with the alterations as proposed in the appeal, would still not be appropriate in such a historically important area. Objective TO-02 of the Town Development Plan refers to ACAs and states that '*New developments shall support the architectural integrity, quality and character of such areas*'. The installation of an ATM in this window would cause an imbalance to the overall look of the building and would be undesirable in this designated ACA. The Town Development Plan states that proposals for development in any ACA that involve a new building, reuse or change of use and extensions will be required to:

- *Conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the ACA;*
- *Respect the scale, massing, proportions, design and materials of existing Structures;*
- *Retain important exterior architectural features that contribute to the character and appearance of the ACA.*

7.2.5. In addition to the policy and objectives outlined in the Westport Town and environs Development Plan, paragraph 8.5.8 of the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines (2011) states that any new fixtures should not detract from the character of an ACA.



- 7.2.6. On the matter of demonstratable need for an ATM in the area (as raised in the Appeal Statement), I note that there is an existing ATM within easy walking distance, located approximately 100 metres to the south east of the site, on the front façade of the AIB Bank on Shop Street. While it is noted that the main issue with regard to the current proposal is its impact on the ACA, in addition to this, it is my opinion the Shop street ATM, provides for an adequate service in the immediate area and therefore delivers on Objective TFO-02 of the Town Development Plan.
- 7.2.7. Following consideration of all the information submitted as part of the original application and the appeal documents, it is considered that the introduction of an ATM machine to the front window of this structure would be obstructive in impact and would set an undesirable precedent for similar developments within the ACA.

### 7.3. **Appropriate Assessment**

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development within an urban area and separation distance to the nearest European site, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

## 8.0 **Recommendation**

- 8.1. I recommend that planning permission should be refused for the reasons and considerations as set out below.

## 9.0 **Reasons and Considerations**

Having regard to the character of the existing structure and to the established pattern, scale and architectural character of Westport Town Centre Architectural Conservation Area , it is considered that the proposed development, by way of its design in combination with the current shopfront would fail to integrate satisfactorily with the existing building. As a result, the proposed development would be obtrusive in impact and would set an undesirable precedent for similar development in the area. The proposed development would be contrary to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines of the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht 2011

and Policy TP-01 and Objective TO-02 of the Westport Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (as varied). The proposed development would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and development of the area.

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Máire Daly  
Planning Inspector

20<sup>th</sup> July 2020