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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2017

**by Mike Worden BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/M3455/W/17/3179244**

**56 The Strand, Longton, Stoke on Trent ST3 2NL**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Notemachine UK Ltd against the decision of Stoke-on-Trent Council.
  - The application Ref 60871, dated 14 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2017.
  - The development proposed is the retention of an ATM installed through the existing glazing to the centre of the shop front. Replacing part of the existing glazing with a white laminate composite security panel incorporating the ATM fascia with black bezel surround and white internally illuminated lettering Free Cash Withdrawals out of black background. Blue LED halo illumination to the ATM surround.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural Matter

2. The development has been carried out and therefore I am considering the appeal retrospectively.
3. Following the issuing of the decision notice the appellant has submitted a revised plan<sup>1</sup> which proposes a number of amendments to the development. I have taken that plan into account in reaching my decision.

### Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the Longton Conservation Area.

### Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two storey building on one of the main roads and primary shopping frontages through Longton town centre. It is the tallest building in a small terrace of properties of different sizes and designs. It has a shop at ground floor level. The upper storey has decorative features and four windows facing the street, one of which is a bay. Although not listed or locally listed, overall it is an imposing building which more reflects the historical importance of the Conservation Area than some of the buildings nearby.

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<sup>1</sup> Proposed Plan and Elevation dated 28 June 2017

6. The character of the Longton Conservation Area stems from the tightly packed nature of its commercial buildings, many of which date from the nineteenth century. It is a busy, urban and commercial area. The area has changed over time and a number of later buildings have developed including a modern parade opposite the appeal property. The Council has prepared the *Longton Conservation Area Appraisal* 2009 which identifies the unsympathetic replacement of shopfronts in modern designs which are not in character with the buildings above as a pressure and threat within the Conservation Area.
7. The development has introduced an automated teller machine (ATM) in the centre of the shop front together with other alterations. This is a dominant and obtrusive feature which reduces the extent of the traditional glazed area of the former shop front and breaks the shop front into two which jars with the upper elevations of the building.
8. The buildings either side of the appeal property are not of particular architectural merit and are not as imposing buildings as the appeal property. Nevertheless, their frontages are not broken up as much as that of the appeal property.
9. The appellant has submitted a revised plan which would have the effect of removing the surround and composite panel from the ATM. Whilst this would represent an improvement on the shop front as it currently stands, I consider that the central position and dominance of the ATM on the shop front would still have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the building.
10. I recognise from the evidence provided that the ATM is well used and that such facilities are necessary in town centres such as Longton and assist the local businesses. Nevertheless I consider that the development has a detrimental effect on the appearance of an important building within the Conservation Area and causes harm to the character and appearance of the Longton Conservation Area.
11. I consider that this harm is *less than substantial* in the words of the National Planning Policy Framework. I consider that the public benefits set out above do not outweigh the harm identified. Paying special attention to the statutory duty in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I consider that the development does not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Longton Conservation Area. I consider that the development is contrary to Policies CSP1 and CSP2 of the *Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke on Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026* which respectively seek to ensure that new developments are well designed, respecting character, identity and context; and that the character and appearance of the historic heritage in the City and Borough is preserved and enhanced.

## Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Mike Worden*

INSPECTOR