

FAKENHAM – LA/26/0696- Installation of ATM, accessible ramp with a railing, internally illuminated ATM signage, and associated works at 14 Market Place, Fakenham.
Applicant: Mr P Williams

Listed Building Consent

Target Date: 26.06.2026

Extension of time 23.07.2026

Case Officer: Nicola Wray

RELEVANT SITE CONSTRAINTS:

Within Settlement Boundary of Fakenham
Town Centre Area (Fakenham)
Grade II Listed Building
Conservation Area - Fakenham
Primary Shopping Area
Primary Retail Frontage
Within Settlement Boundary of Fakenham
Town Centre Area (Fakenham)

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

PF/00/1548	Refused – Refusal upheld at Appeal Insertion of an Automatic Teller Machine
LA/00/1570	Refused - upheld at Appeal Insertion of an Automatic Teller Machine
LA/26/0603	Approved 12.05.2026 Installation of defibrillator and bleed kit cabinets to external wall of building
PF/26/0688	Pending Consideration Installation of new ATM in part of existing ground floor window opening, and accessible ramp with railings
ADV/26/0689	Pending Consideration Internally illuminated ATM Collar

THE APPLICATION

14 Market Place is a Grade II Listed Building set within Fakenham Conservation Area and the Town Centre. This application seeks listed building to install an ATM in part of the existing ground floor window opening, and an accessible ramp with railings. The application is accompanied by relevant planning permission and advertisement applications, which are reported concurrently to this meeting

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

Cllr Vickers and Cllr Punchard were contacted as the application's recommendation is contrary to the view of the Town Council. Cllr Vicker confirmed she would be calling the application to Development Committee on the basis of public benefit and public support for the application and Cllr Punchard supports this stance.

REPRESENTATIONS:

No representations have been received on this application

CONSULTATIONS:

Ward Councillors – See above call-in request, Cllr Vickers and Cllr Punchard have voiced support for the proposal

Fakenham Town Council – Support

A further statement was also submitted later by the Town Council requesting that its view as the democratically elected representative body for local residents, be given significant weight and that every effort be made to facilitate the installation of this important facility.

Conservation and Design – Objection

The previous scheme only involved installing an ATM, this revised scheme would be inherently more impactful and result in greater harm to the character and appearance of the listed heritage asset.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the proposed development may raise issues relevant to

Article 8: The Right to respect for private and family life.

Article 1 of the First Protocol: The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Having considered the likely impact on an individual's Human Rights, and the general interest of the public, refusal of this application as recommended is considered to be justified, proportionate and in accordance with planning law.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 - SECTION 17

The installation of an external facing ATM machine has the potential to increase the likelihood of crime taking place (theft/fraud) at the ATM machine itself or in close proximity, especially in the evening and in the dark. The presence of the ATM also increases the opportunity for physical theft of the ATM machine itself via organised crime, which has the potential to lead to significant damage to the heritage asset.

LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are not considered to be material to this case.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

North Norfolk Local Plan

Policy E4: Retail & Town Centre Development
Policy E5: Signage & Shopfronts
Policy ENV6: Protection of Amenity
Policy ENV7: Protecting & Enhancing the Historic Environment
Policy ENV8: High Quality Design

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development
Chapter 4: Decision-making
Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places
Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance:

North Norfolk Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (December 2008)

Other Material Considerations

The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Heritage England Guidance (Easy Access to Historic Buildings, 2015)

OFFICER ASSESSMENT:

Main issues for consideration:

- 1. Background**
- 2. Principle**
- 3. Impact on Heritage Asset**

1. Background

In 2000, planning permission and listed building consent were sought to install an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) within the front elevation of the Grade II Listed Building, also being used as Nationwide Bank at the time.

The proposal included the removal of the furthest left lower sash window and the installation of the ATM.

The Local Planning Authority, through a Development Committee Decision, decided to refuse planning permission and listed building consent, giving the following reasons:

“The character and appearance of the Grade II Listed Building and the Conservation Area will be severely damaged by the installation of the proposed ATM machine. The balance of the Georgian elevations will be distorted and one sash window will be lost.”.

This decision was upheld by the Planning Inspector on appeal who cited in his conclusion that “The appeal premises are a prominent feature in a recently enhanced pedestrian open space. The strong symmetry of the building and the fine detailing of the construction would be eroded by the removal of one sash and the insertion of the automatic teller machine. Whilst the works would be reversible, I consider that this is unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future and in the meantime the proposed works would fail to preserve the listed building and its special architectural features and would not preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area.”

Officers consider that the previous Inspector’s decision is capable of being a material planning consideration, the weight to be afforded to it is a matter for the decision maker, in this case the Development Committee. It is also recognised that some 20 plus years have elapsed since that appeal decision, the proposal related to the lefthand lower window (the current application related to the right hand lower window) and, with the closure of other banks in the Town, the overall context of the scheme has materially changed with different Local Plan Policy considerations together with the NPPF. As such, Officers consider that only limited weight should be afforded to that appeal decision.

2. Principle

Fakenham is classified as a Large Growth Town where the majority of new development is expected to be located. There are a number of heritage assets in the town including listed buildings and a conservation area. This application is for the siting of an ATM and an accessible ramp, within the town centre.

Works to a grade II listed building would be supported in principle so long as the proposed works conserve and, where possible, enhance the heritage assets and do not diminish the asset’s significance. Where heritage harm arises, the public benefits of the works will need to be sufficient to outweigh any identified heritage harm.

3. Impact on Heritage Asset

The purpose of Local Plan Policy ENV7 is to protect and where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets, whilst recognising the opportunities for sympathetic reuse and regeneration. The policy provides specific criteria for designated and non-designated heritage assets, conservation areas, archaeology and heritage at risk.

The property in question is Grade II listed and within the Fakenham Conservation Area.

With this application, Officers consider that the heritage balance lays between the need to protect heritage assets whilst recognising the increase in local service provision to meet the changing needs of the community together with enhanced disabled access.

Members are reminded of the great weight afforded to protecting heritage assets under Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, through Local Plan Policy ENV 7 and through the National Planning Policy Framework.

Heritage England Guidance (Easy Access to Historic Buildings, 2015) confirms that the “need to conserve the special characteristics of historic buildings is recognised within Approved Document M” under the Building Regulations.

Approved Document M itself states:

“The need to conserve the special characteristics of such historic buildings must be recognised. They are a finite resource with cultural importance. In such work the aim should be to improve accessibility where and to the extent that it is practically possible, always provided that the work does not prejudice the character of the historic building, or increase the risk of long-term deterioration to the building fabric or fittings.”

It is important to note that paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Local Planning Authorities to give great weight to the conservation of heritage assets. Conservation and Design Officers have objected to the proposal citing that the proposal would result in harm to designated heritage assets - both the host property and the wider Fakenham Conservation Area.

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF provides that *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*

Conservation and Design Officers have raised an objection to the scheme, finding the proposals create harm to the heritage assets for the following reasons:

- 1. Installing the ATM would result in the removal of the righthand lower sash window and its relocation to storage. Whilst theoretically then reversible, there is always an inherent risk associated with fixtures being set aside indefinitely for reuse.*
- 2. As touched on by the inspector, the significance of the host building is derived from its balanced and homogenous Georgian proportions and detailing. Clearly the proposed alterations would undermine this refined symmetry and coherent appearance.*
- 3. As shown, the proposed ramp would butt up directly to the base of the building and thus would potentially trap moisture within its historic fabric (assuming it will likely be formed in concrete). With it also seemingly obstructing the basement grill, a potentially valuable ventilation route could be lost along with the associated evidential value.*
- 4. The building stands prominently within the core of the Fakenham Conservation Area and makes a significant contribution to framing its Market Place. Therefore, with the utilitarian ramp appearing to project out into the public realm, and thus compromising the building’s clean lines and direct connection to the formal space, additional harm would also be caused to the wider designation.*

The Development Committee, as decision maker, will need consider the **public benefits** that would result from the development against the identified heritage harm. The applicant confirms the benefits to be;

- a) Restoration of convenient public access to essential banking services out of hours
- b) Maintain accessible cash facilities, which is important for residents, local businesses and visitors.
- c) Positive contribution to the town's economic vitality
- d) Provide an accessible means of reaching an ATM.

Officers acknowledge that Nationwide is the sole remaining bank within Fakenham Town Centre. The proposed ATM would allow for a second place to access cash for the community within the Town Centre (the other being Tesco on Oak Street) when the Nationwide Bank is not open.

Other ATM's are located outside the town centre at Morrisons and the Shell garage, both of which are over a mile away, the Shell garage is 2 miles and Morrisons is 1.3 miles away.

In defining the planning balance in terms of heritage matters officers have also afforded some weight to the previous appeal decision (noted above), finding that the current proposals add further heritage harm to the dismissed appeal by the addition of the accessibility ramp.

Extensive discussions have been held with the applicant around alternative provisions to install an ATM that may not affect the most sensitive elevation of the building, but no revision has been possible. This included exploring moving the ATM to the left hand side of the building frontage, but this was not possible due to internal layout of the building.

In respect of other material considerations, the Development Committee should also be aware that there has been a recent approval to install a defibrillator and bleed kit to the front façade. Whilst some harm was identified from this alteration, the public benefits from this clearly outweighed the much more limited heritage harm. The defibrillator and bleed kit are significantly smaller and less obtrusive additions than the proposal being considered under this application.

On balance, Officers consider that the proposal will result in "less than substantial" heritage harm. This harm will need to be weighed in the planning balance against the public benefits of the proposal.

Planning Balance and Conclusion:

Officers have carefully assessed the benefits arising from the application and where possible have afforded positive weight to these aspects. However, the harm arising to heritage assets is considerable and note consideration of similar proposals under a previous appeal. Officers guide members that significant weight must be given to the protection of heritage assets and afford weight to the appeal decision.

For the reasons given above the proposed development is not considered to be in accordance with the aims of the key Local Plan Policies as set out above. There are no material

considerations that indicate the application should be determined otherwise. Refusal is therefore recommended.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSAL for the following reasons:

1. The impact and protrusion of the proposal into the open space in front of it, combined with the identified heritage harm mean that the proposal is considered to be contrary to Local Plan Policy ENV7 and Policy ENV8 through its failure to preserve or enhance the designated heritage assets and historic environment.
2. The resultant impact of the ATM and the accessible ramp would interfere with the symmetry of the front elevation of the affected Grade II Listed Building, a feature that gains its significance from its balanced proportions and detailing, thereby resulting in harm to the designated heritage asset. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Local Plan Policy ENV7 as it would fail to preserve or enhance the designated heritage asset.

Final wording to be delegated to the Assistant Director – Planning