

PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF DRY COOLERS AND ACOUSTIC SCREEN ON THE ROOF AT MAIDA VALE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

For:

BRITISH TELECOMS

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PLANNING STATEMENT

ON: MAIDA VALE TELEPHONE

EXCHANGE, 138 MAIDA VALE,

LONDON, W9 1QD

FOR: BRITISH TELECOMS

FRANKHAM PROJECT NO.: 700708

Signature:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Frankham Projects to support a detailed planning application submitted to Camden Council for the installation of dry coolers and an associated acoustic screen at Maida Vale Telephone Exchange.

1.2 Full planning permission is sought for the following works:

"The installation of dry air coolers, and an associated acoustic screen around the proposed coolers."

1.3 This planning statement appraises the scheme within the context of the planning policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Council's Development Plan. It is set out as follows:

- Section 2 describes the site and surroundings.
- Section 3 provides an overview of the proposed development.
- Section 4 summarises the relevant national and local planning policies.
- Section 5 assesses the scheme against the relevant national and local planning policies with regards to the key planning considerations including the principle of the development, design and residential amenity; and
- Section 6 draws together the conclusions.

1.4 This planning statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents and drawings which form part of the overall planning application submission:

- Application Form
- Site Location Plan
- Drawing Pack
- Noise Assessment

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site is Maida Vale Telephone Exchange, 138 Maida Vale, London, W9 1QD. The site is located on the north-eastern side of Maida Vale and comprises a five-storey building of brick construction with under-croft parking to the front, associate external space surrounding the building and vehicle access to the front of the building. In addition to the primary uses of the telephone exchange internally, the roof hosts electronic communication apparatus.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is mixed in character, with both commercial and residential uses within the surrounding area. Immediately to the south-east of the site is an eight-storey residential building. To the north-west of the site is an Islamic Centre. To the south-west of the site are residential uses with commercial units at ground floor level, along with a public house. Immediately to the rear of the site exists Greville Nature Reserve which is heavily vegetated.
- 2.3 The application site exists 0.3 metres to the south-east of Kilburn High Road station. Maida Vale tube station exists to the south of the site.
- 2.4 The St John's Wood Conservation Area exists immediately to the rear of the site, including Greville Nature Reserve. The Islamic Centre located adjacent to the site to the north-west is a Grade II listed building, formerly known as Mecca Social Club Carlton Rooms.
- 2.5 To the north-east of the site exists Grade II listed 1 Greville Place and Grade II listed 3-5 Greville Place, however it is not considered that the application site contributes to the setting of these Grade II listed buildings to a significant extent.
- 2.6 The site exists to the south-east of the Kilburn Town Centre boundaries.
- 2.7 The application site is located within Flood Zone 1.

Planning History

- 2.8 2024/4529/P - Maida Vale Telephone Exchange 138 Maida Vale W9 1QD - Removal of existing flue and installation of replacement flue. - Granted 25/11/2024
- 2.9 2024/1237/P - Maida Vale Telephone Exchange 138 Maida Vale London W9 1QD - Erection of a substation and associated enclosure. - Granted 21/05/2024
- 2.10 2022/1440/P - Maida Vale TE Maida Vale, London, W9 1QD - Removal of 6 no. antennas and associated apparatus and installation of 12 no. antennas and supporting steelwork, re-location of 2 no. 300 millimetre dish antennas, and associated apparatus and ancillary works. - Prior approval required - Granted 09/06/2022
- 2.11 2020/2473/P - Maida Vale Telephone Exchange Maida Vale London W9 1QD - Installation of 3x replacement antennas and a GPS unit and ancillary electronic communications apparatus on roof level. - Prior approval require - approval given 25/09/2020

- 2.12 2014/4108/A - British Telecom 138 Maida Vale London W9 1QD - Display of a free standing internally illuminated sign in the forecourt. – Refused 18/07/2014
- 2.13 2012/1223/P - 136-138 Maida Vale London W9 1QD - Installation of metal louvres at ground floor level in 6 window openings on north-west elevation and 3 window openings on south-east elevation at Telephone Exchange (Sui Generis) (retrospective). – Withdrawn
- 2.14 2004/0247/P - Maida Vale Telephone Exchange 136-138 Maida Vale London W9 1QB - Installation of T-mobile telecommunication apparatus, including 6 antennae, equipment cabin, and ancillary works on rooftop. – Granted 16/03/2004
- 2.15 PWX0103686 - MAIDA VALE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE 136-138 MAIDA VALE LONDON W9 1QB - Replacement of 2 windows at rear third floor level with metal louvres in connection with the internal installation of an air handling unit. As shown on drawing no(s) 33755/5/001 - 6. – Granted 06/08/2001
- 2.16 PWX0003037 - MAIDA VALE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE 136-138 MAIDA VALE LONDON W9 1QD - Replacement of four windows on the fourth floor south east elevation with metal louvres, as shown by drawing number HCD998/E4884. – Granted 22/11/2000
- 2.17 K5/2/1/31615 - Maida Vale Telephone Exchange, 138 Maida Vale, W9 - Alterations and additions in connection with the installation of air conditioning units, including the replacement of exhaust pipe. – Granted 05/12/1980
- 2.18 K5/2/1/11171 - The Maida Vale Telephone Exchange, 138, Maida Vale, W.9. - The erection of a new plant room on the roof of the Maida Vale Telephone Exchange, 138, Maida Vale, W.9. – Granted 20/05/1971

3.0 THE PROPOSALS

3.1 Full planning permission is sought for the following:

"The installation of dry air coolers, and an associated acoustic screen around the proposed coolers."

3.2 The proposal relates to the western side of the roof. The proposal will include 7no new dry coolers on the roof and the acoustic screen will encompass the north, south and western elevations of around the coolers.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 This section provides a summary of the national and local development plan policies against which the planning application will be assessed. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the development plan comprises the London Plan (2021) and the Camden Local Plan (2017).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF contains national policy on a range of topic areas including decision-taking, viability, affordable housing, design, open space and the economy. The 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' remains the central tenet of the NPPF. The most relevant chapters for this application are listed below:

Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development
Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
Chapter 12 – Achieving well designed places
Chapter 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The London Plan (2021)

4.3 On 2 March 2021, the Mayor of London published the London Plan. The spatial development strategy sets a strategic framework for planning in Greater London and forms part of the statutory Development Plan for Greater London. The relevant policies are:

Policy D3 – Optimising site capacity through a design led approach
Policy D4 – Noise
Policy HC1 – Heritage conservation and growth
Policy SI 1 – Improving air quality

Camden Local Plan (2017)

- 4.4 The current adopted development plan for Camden is the Camden Local Plan (2017), adopted on 3rd July 2017, the most relevant policies are listed below:

Policy A1 – Managing the impact of development

Policy A4 – Noise and vibration

Policy D1 Design

Policy D2 – Heritage

Policy CC4 – Air quality

5.0 ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The following section assesses the scheme against the NPPF, the relevant Development Plan policies as well as any material considerations. The key planning considerations are also considered in detail.

Principle of development

- 5.2 The proposed development is urgently required to upgrade the infrastructure at the telephone exchange to provide greater stability to the functioning of the telephone exchange. The dry coolers will provide a necessary air flow, which is a critical piece of infrastructure and is essential for supporting BT operations.
- 5.3 The proposed equipment will be of a high specification, the modern design will ensure the coolers are as efficient as possible, therefore enhancing the environmental performance of the telephone exchange. The principle of installing the equipment should therefore be considered acceptable. An assessment of all other material planning considerations is included below.

Design & Heritage

- 5.4 Chapter 12 of the NPPF (2024) attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, with national policy placing great emphasis on the importance of creating, high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places.
- 5.5 Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2024) and Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) seeks to ensure that development proposals which affect heritage assets conserve their significance.
- 5.6 Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan (2017) seeks to ensure that the Council will preserve and where appropriate enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings.
- 5.7 It is recognised that the site exists to the south-east of the Grade II Listed Islamic Centre. The proposed screening would be sited on an elevation which sits adjacent to the Grade II listed building and therefore would contribute to the setting of the listed building. However, given the height of the development in comparison to the Islamic centre, it is unlikely to cause any visual

impacts on this. On this basis, it is considered that the development would not have an adverse impact on the significance of the adjacent heritage asset.

- 5.8 The St John's Wood Conservation Area exists to the rear of the site, given the siting of the development, it is not considered that the development would have any meaningful impact on the setting of this conservation area. It is also recognised that by virtue of the siting of the development, no further listed buildings would be impacted by the development.

Residential Amenity

- 5.9 The NPPF (2024) at paragraph 135 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments are, *'sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);'* and *'are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;'*
- 5.10 Policy A1 of the Camden Local Plan (2017) states that development should not unacceptably harm amenity including impacts on visual privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing.
- 5.11 Although the screening will be located on the front elevation, in view of the residential properties opposite, the screening will be no higher than the existing 6th floor. Therefore, the installation of the screening would have no material impact on the local residential amenity, by way of loss of daylight or sunlight and privacy.

Noise

- 5.12 Policy D14 of the London Plan (2021) states that to mitigate noise to improve health and quality of life, residential and other non-aviation development should manage noise in a number of ways including avoiding significant adverse noise impacts on health and quality of life.
- 5.13 A noise assessment has been submitted in support of this application.
- 5.14 The proposed coolers are located on the front aspect of the roof, therefore would not be close to any residential properties and as such would not give rise to unacceptable noise impacts. The screening has been designed to mitigate the impact of the coolers, ensuring a reduction in noise output, therefore the proposal will not have any impact on the surrounding area.
- 5.15 The surrounding area is mixed in nature with some commercial units, a busy highway and a generally high level of background noise. In this context the proposal will not have any unacceptable noise impacts.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed development seeks to install new dry air coolers on the roof to provide an enhancement to the existing infrastructure at Maida Vale Telephone Exchange. The upgrade proposed to the infrastructure is required to ensure the continued functioning of the Exchange.
- 6.2 The proposed works have been carefully considered to ensure that the impact of the development will be limited as far as possible. The impact of the development on the character of the building, the surrounding area and adjacent heritage assets has been detailed above and is acceptable. There would be no adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring owners/occupiers.
- 6.3 On this basis, the development is acceptable and complies with national and local planning policy. It is requested that planning permission be granted, subject to any conditions deemed appropriate.