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| Delegated Report | | Analysis sheet | Expiry Date: | 23/10/2012 |
| | | N/A | Consultation Expiry Date: | 18/10/12 |
| Officer | | | Application Number(s) | |
| Tania Skelli-Yaoz | | | 2012/4546/P | |
| Application Address | | | Drawing Numbers | |
| Footway Adjacent to Byng Place London WC1E 7JH | | | See decision notice | |
| PO 3/4 | Area Team Signature | C&UD | Authorised Officer Signature | |
| | | Design surgery 10/9/12 | | |
| Proposal(s) | | | | |
| Installation of 10m high pole containing telecommunication antennae, equipment cabinet and meter pillar on existing footway. | | | | |
| Recommendation(s): | | Refuse planning permission | | |
| Application Type: | | Full Planning Permission | | |

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|------------------------------------|--|----|------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| Conditions or Reasons for Refusal: | Refer to Draft Decision Notice | | | | | |
| Informatives: | | | | | | |
| Consultations | | | | | | |
| Adjoining Occupiers: | No. notified | 18 | No. of responses | 03 | No. of objections | 03 |
| | | | No. electronic | 03 | | |
| Summary of consultation responses: | <p>A site notice was displayed on 07/09/2012 and a press advert was published on 13/9/2012. No comments were received.</p> <p><u>University of London, Senate House:</u> Object. ‘Such a construction would be an obstruction on a busy footway and would be detrimental to the safety of pedestrians. Byng Place is situated close to Torrington Square which, along with much of the surrounding area, is within a Conservation Area which includes many listed and other fine buildings. The University, along with other landowners, does all it can to preserve the visual amenity of the area by maintaining the look and original character of nearby existing buildings and squares in its ownership. A tall pole in such a sensitive position would detract from this and would go against the objectives of the Conservation Area policies.</p> <p>The proposed telecommunications pole would look out of place and because of its height and design, would be visually intrusive and dominate the streetscape of the area.’</p> <p><u>30 Torrington Sq:</u> Objection. ‘...the pole is proposed to be placed at the northern end of a square bounded by Christ the King Church, Senate House and 5 late regency town houses. It will have an adverse effect on the built environment and ruin the sightlines down the length of the square.’ Could it be mounted on top of a building?</p> <p><u>Flat 1, 30 Torrington Sq:</u> Object, on ground of siting of pole which is very exposed and not supported by any other tall structure in the area and thereby will overpower the nearby, attractive and historically designed lamppost. A better location should be found.</p> | | | | | |
| CAAC comments: | <p><u>The Bloomsbury CAAC:</u> object.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The ‘site photograph’ is not of the proposed location which is (according to the detailed site location plan) the open space to the left of the building in the photo.- If this pole is required in the public footway at all then it is better in front of a building rather than open space.- Why can the equipment not be put on top of a building instead? | | | | | |

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Site Description

The proposed site is located on the footpath to the south side of Byng Place. The land to the south of Byng Place accommodates a raised concrete area of open space and several mature trees. The surrounding area accommodates university buildings of predominantly 5 & 6 storeys in height and a church to the north across Byng Place. The area forms part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and there are several listed buildings in the vicinity.

Relevant History

2012/2427/P REFUSED 26/06/2012 Installation of 10m high pole containing telecommunication antennae, equipment cabinet and meter pillar on existing footway.

Reasons for refusal:

- 1) The proposed telecommunication pole, and associated equipment, by reason of its siting, height and design, would result in a dominant addition and create visual clutter at street level, and would have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the streetscene and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, contrary to policy CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development), CS14 (promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP21 (Development connecting to the highway network), DP24 (securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.
- 2) The proposed telecommunication pole, by virtue of its location, would create an obstruction within the footway, which would be detrimental to the safety of pedestrians, would hinder pedestrian movements and harm the promotion of walking as an alternative to motorised transport, contrary to policies CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP17 (Walking, cycling and public transport), DP21 (Development connecting to the highway network) and DP29 (Improving access) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Chapter 5 – paras 43-46

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS1 - Distribution of growth

CS5 - Managing the impact of growth and development

CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

DP17 - Walking, cycling and public transport

DP21 - Development connecting to the highway network

DP24 - Securing high quality design

DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage

DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

CPG1 – Design – Chapter 11

Assessment

Proposal

The intention is to install a 12.5m high pole containing telecommunication antennas, equipment cabinet and meter pillar on existing footway for both O2 and Vodafone as part of a new joint site-sharing exercise and due to the need to provide enhanced 3G mobile phone coverage.

The scheme is not permitted development under Part 24 of the GPDO as it involves new antennae within a conservation area. Notwithstanding this, full planning permission is sought here.

Justification

The application states, that as detailed on the Search Area Plan, there is a very specific location requirement for the proposed installation in order to meet the coverage deficiency in the vicinity of Byng Place. There are no existing telecommunications installations within the search area which would be suitable for sharing and every building in the search area forms part of the University College London, who is unwilling to accommodate telecommunications equipment on their properties. On that basis, the applicant states, the only available option to meet the demand for improved coverage in the area is to proceed with a streetworks style installation on an area of public highway. A search of the streets within the search area found that the proposed site on Byng Place was the preferred location in terms of providing the required level of coverage to the target area.

Principle

Central Government guidance contained within PPG8 has now been superseded by guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF encourages local planning authorities to support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband. Therefore, the principle of the development has been considered as acceptable.

A previous application for a similar telecommunication mast and equipment has been proposed and found unacceptable for two reasons as detailed above. This proposal provides an alternative design, however the location of the proposed equipment has not changed.

Design and location of equipment

As previously outlined, the proposed pole and associated cabinet would be located on a section of the highway where the Council has recently invested in a shared surface to enhance this area for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The resultant area is an attractive and inviting place. It is also noted that the proposed siting would not be screened by trees to its background to defuse or camouflage its appearance. Due to the open nature of Byng Place, the proposed pole would be a prominent feature and will appear overly dominant in this position. Existing street furniture is not located in such obvious positions and in terms of appearance the pole does not relate to any architectural features in the surrounding area.

When combined with other street furniture, i.e. existing wheelie bins (which vary in location), lampposts, equipment cabinets, bicycle stands and advertisement signs, the proposal would result in unacceptable levels of clutter in the street scene, harmful to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This would be contrary to the guidance of the NPPF which aims to keep telecommunication sites to a minimum and encourage applicants to explore utilising existing facilities.

The revised design of the antennae is slimmer and therefore 2.5m higher. The proposed antennae, by reason of its siting, height and design, would create visual clutter at street level and would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the streetscene and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area as the proposal fails to contribute to the creation of high quality streets and public spaces.

The revised design is therefore not considered to have overcome the previous reason for refusal, as it is still highly prominent in its proposed location.

Highway safety

The paved areas surrounding Byng Place experience extremely high pedestrian flows, particularly during peak times. As previously stated, the proposed siting of the pole is right at the junction of where the footpath meets the shared surface and would cause an obvious obstruction for users of this shared surface, as it would be located within the path that many pedestrians use, this was clearly evident during the site visit. A telecommunication pole in this position would clearly be detrimental to pedestrian movements and the quality of the public realm.

Not only would the proposal create additional street clutter, but in doing so, the proposal would reduce the amount of available footway, to the detrimental to the quality of the public realm. This would reduce amenity for

pedestrians, thus having a detrimental impact on the promotion of walking as an alternative to motorised transport, contrary to the aims and objectives of LDF policy DP21 which states that Camden will expect developments connecting to the highway network to:

- avoid causing harm to highway safety or hinder pedestrian movement and avoid unnecessary street clutter;
- contribute to the creation of high quality streets and public spaces.

The proposal fails to avoid causing harm to highway safety or hinder pedestrian movement and therefore is considered to be unacceptable.

Other issues

The proposal involves mast-sharing, a feature which is generally encouraged by national and Council guidance and, provided that no other issues are raised, may be an acceptable approach.

Due to the location of the proposed equipment, it is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbours.

Recommendation

Refuse the pole on grounds that it is detrimental to the visual amenity of the streetscene and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in addition the pole fails to avoid causing harm to highway safety or hinder pedestrian movement.