DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

This Design and Access Statement is provided in conjunction with the Supplementary Information Template, drawings and supporting material that was submitted with this planning application.

This statement is submitted pursuant to Article 4C of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended).

In accordance with the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development¹, and published Government guidance, this proposal was drawn up having regard to the need for good design.

In particular:

- Considerations of design and layout are informed by the context, having regard not just to any immediate neighbouring buildings but the townscape and landscape of the wider locality. The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and ecology all help to determine the character and identity of the development.
- The scale, massing and height of proposed development have been considered in relation to that of adjoining buildings; the topography, the general pattern of heights in the area; and views, vistas and landmarks.

The following general design principles have been taken into account in respect of this proposed telecommunications development:

- A proper assessment of the character of the area concerned.
- That the design shows an appreciation of context;

Introduction

It needs to be borne in mind that the proposed development is for the development of a radio telecommunications installation. Hence, access is deliberately restricted, where appropriate, for the security of the installation.

Pre Application Discussions and Negotiations

Pre-application advice was initially sought from the local authority on 11/12/2009 for 2No.flagpole antennas on the roof along with equipment housing screened behind a timber framed enclosure.

The planning officer, upon receipt of feedback from the conservation and urban design officer, advised that the proposed telecom equipment was likely to give rise to an unacceptable level of clutter on the roof, subsequently causing harm to the appearance and character of the existing building and wider conservation area. The officer raised particular concerns about the affect of the flagpole located on the roof of the access stairwell on views from Scala Street.

¹ Paragraphs 120-126.

Following further discussions between the applicant's agents and the local authority, it was agreed that re-designing the flagpole antenna on the roof of the stairwell, which was causing the greatest concern, should be investigated. As is detailed within the attached Supplementary Information document, it was noted that the parapet wall extended above the stairwell roof, which meant that a mock glass reinforced glass (GRP) 'chimney stack' could be proposed to accommodate the antennas required to the rear of the building. The net effect of this change was a two metre reduction in height to this element of the scheme and a design that fits with the characteristics of the rear of building and will be painted to match the existing render.

However, it was not possible to provide the requisite radio coverage at 90 degrees from the rear of the roof space (due to clipping issues) therefore an antenna to the front of the building was still required. It was suggested that the flagpole to the front of the building was still the best design available to O2 given the existence of other flagpoles on buildings nearby. The absence of any existing masonry / chimney stacks realistically precluding the introduction of a mock chimney stack to the front of the roof space. The officer advised that the [proposed screening for the equipment housing was appropriate.

Documentation Submitted with Application

- Drawings referenced 101, 102 Rev. A, 103 Rev. A and 104.
- Supplementary Information Template.
- Coverage plots.

Design Component

It was noted during the initial design survey that a number of buildings within the locality accommodate flagpoles (this is particularly evident from roof level) and this influenced choice of design for this proposal at 39 Whitfield Street, which initially comprised 2No. 4.5 metre high dual-stack flagpoles containing a total of 6No. antennas, along with 2No. equipment cabinets screened by a new timber enclosure and development ancillary thereto on the roof of the building.

As detailed above, pre-application discussions with the local authority led to a revision of the scheme in which the flagpole located on the roof access stairwell was replaced by a 2.5m tall glass reinforced plastic (GRP) 'chimney stack' (painted to match the existing render) accommodating 2No. half height panel antennas.

Attention is respectfully direct to section 3 of the accompanying Supplementary Information document where the reasons for and benefits of this choice are explained.

Assessment of the site's physical and social context:

The application site is 39 Whitfield Street, a 5 storey building located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area in Fitzrovia, London. The surrounding area has an urban character with mixed residential and business uses.

Further detail is provided within the Supplementary Information document.

Access Component

Access to the site will to be limited to the operator and its authorised agents, as well as those of the other licensed operators with equipment at the site. Users of the site will be industry workers, in regard to both construction and maintenance visits. Access to the antennas will be severely restricted. Those who do access the site will have been trained to access the site safely and will be wearing appropriate PPE. In addition, warning signage will be clearly attached to equipment and access points. The signage will outline at the minimum that caution is required as radio transmitters are operating, and that no unauthorised persons are allowed beyond the point of signage.

Access arrangements will not change following construction. All operators have a site database, which is accessed prior to construction and prior to site maintenance visits. In terms of access, the database gives directions to the site, dictates where parking is to be undertaken, and outlines procedures to enter the site, such as procuring access keys and permission from site provider.