

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 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 too 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 development:

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

SITE CONDITIONS, TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS, LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

The site is located within the London Borough of Camden, in a high density commercial landscape. On all sides the site is bordered by office buildings some of which have been granted listed building status. The application site does not sit within a conservation area or any other specific land designation.

The London Telecom Tower is a landmark structure in the centre of London, designed by architects from the Ministry for Public Building and Works Dept. It was commissioned by the Post Office as a centre of national and international telephone communication by ultrahigh frequency microwave transmission. The tower is 189m tall and is constructed around a cylindrical tapered reinforced concrete centre to ensure maximum angle for transmission, whilst reducing wind resistance and consequent movement as far as possible to maintain transmission signals. At the top of the structure is a wider gallery section, which used to house a restaurant; above this is a large advertising platform. The tower was listed as Grade II in 2003.

The building is still very much in use and is a major central telecommunications hub for the UK. The communications equipment installed on the building has been upgraded over the years to reflect the advances in technology, with the majority of microwave transmission links now replaced with subterranean fibre optic links

The application site is at a height of 134m, this area of the tower is an established telecommunications site, containing a number of microwave transmission dishes of various sizes.

Pre Application Discussions and Negotiations

Camden Council was contacted on the 22nd June 2015, a planning officer responded on the 25th confirming that the tower was listed. The BT Communication Tower has been subject to a number of communications/telecommunications applications, the applications mentioned below demonstrate that the principle of telecommunications development at this site is firmly established.

2014/1726/P – Permission Granted for 8 antennas and 2 microwave dishes
2014/0930/P – Permission Granted for 6 x 0.6m microwave dishes
2013/1697/P – Permission Granted for 1 x microwave dish
2012/6283/P – Permission Granted for 4 x microwave dishes
2012/0048/P – Permission Granted for 5 x microwave dishes
2011/3687/P – Permission Granted for 7 antennae and 2 dishes
PS9705137 – Permission Granted with conditions for 7 microwave dishes
PSX0105042 – Permission Granted with conditions for satellite installation

Documentation Submitted with Application

Plans and elevations 4004869 Sheets 1-4
Design and Access Statements

Covering Letter
LL notification letter
SSSI
Heritage Statement

Design Component

Use proposed: The proposed development at this installation relates to the installation of 2 x 0.6m microwave dishes at a height of 136m. The dishes will be standard round microwave transmission dishes finished white in colour. The dishes will be fixed to the tower by a combination of galvanised steel frame mounts attached to existing fixing points on the tower. The associated electronic equipment would run through the existing cable trays of the tower, running internally to the “sharers” equipment room, where the electronic equipment will be stored. The height, location and bearing of the proposed dish have been determined by the need to ensure a clear line of sight path between the connecting microwave transmission links. Lower locations on the bare central section of the tower have been deemed technically unviable as obstructions would not allow clear line of sight between the linking sites

Amount: The site will contain 2 x 0.6m microwave dishes with the equipment installed internally within the tower structure. The proposed dishes will be fixed to the galvanised steel frame mounts at a height of 136m. The mast already accommodates a number of communication operators with their various antennae, dishes and cabinets. The exact siting of the dishes and the cabinet are shown on the attached plans.

Layout: The mast has existing telecommunications apparatus and has been used as a transmission station since its construction in 1964. With this proposal the utmost care has been taken to minimise further visual impact from the dishes. We feel this proposal achieves this balance between environmental and technical constraints.

The dish sizes have been restricted to the smallest technically possible. The proposal would site the new equipment in an area already being used for housing communications equipment. The proposal is not considered to have a significant impact above and beyond that caused by the existing equipment. The proposed dishes would not be overly prominent in many immediate views of the tower given the height and obstruction to views by the existing streetscape. Only long views would be impacted, but in this context the equipment would be viewed with existing telecommunications equipment, as such it is not considered these views would be detrimentally impacted. Strategic protected vistas are also not considered to be impacted by the proposals given the development would not project from the building line and as such would not impinge on the vistas. Likewise the impact upon the London skyline would not be impacted for the same reason. It should also be stressed that the height of the structure combined with small scale of the dishes will significantly limit the visual impact of the installation. As a result of the height and volume of the mast I believe the installation of 2 microwave dishes will have minimum visual impact. It is therefore believed that the proposed development will have a neutral impact on the listed building.

The proposal involves the installation of microwave dishes and 1 x small equipment cabinet.

Scale: Dishes – White 2 x 0.6m steel. Cabinets – Green steel – 1.00m x 1.00m x 2.00m – To be installed internally

Landscaping: There will be no landscaping in this project.

Appearance: The telecommunications apparatus to be installed as part of this application consists of 2 microwave transmission dishes, to be located on the existing 189m London Telecom Tower at a height of 136.00m. The development also includes the erection of 1 small equipment cabinet which is also to be installed internally within the body of the tower. The size of the tower along with the proliferation of existing telecoms/communications apparatus on the mast mean that the proposed scheme will have not have any kind of significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of the property.

External built form of the development

Materials – Steel.

Lighting – None

Colour – Dish white, cabinet green

Access

The proposal would be located at 136.00m AGL on the existing transmitting tower on Cleveland Street. There is no public access to the site for obvious safety reasons. Vehicular access to the site is gained from the North West, on Cleveland Mews. Once installed and aligned the equipment can operate with minimal maintenance, in reality it would only need to be checked if the transmission link were to fail.