

Planning Statement

Holborn Telephone Exchange

268-270 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7EJ

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Prepared by

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This document must only be treated as a draft unless it has been signed by the Originators and approved by a Business or Associate Director.

DATE

20 October

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Limitations

This document has been prepared for the stated objective and should not be used for any other purpose without the prior written authority of GL Hearn; we accept no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than for which it was commissioned.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement ("Statement") has been prepared by GL Hearn on behalf of British Telecommunications Plc ('BT Plc') to accompany an application for Full Planning Permission Holborn Telephone Exchange, 268-270 High Holborn, WC1V 7EE (the "Site").

1.2 The application is made to the London Borough of Camden (LB Camden) for:

"Change of Use from Telephone Exchange to Office (Use Class B1) at floors 1, 2 and 4 only"

1.3 The development proposals will enable the currently underused spaces to be fully occupied as offices (Class B1a) within this important office location in Central London. The planning application relates to the 1st, 2nd and 4th floors only. The ground, 3rd and 5th floors will remain in their current use.

1.4 This Statement addresses all the relevant planning policies and material considerations providing the following:

- Summary of Planning Application;
- Description of the Site and Surroundings;
- Applications Proposals;
- Planning Policy Framework;
- Planning Policy Assessment; and
- Summary and Conclusions.

2 SUMMARY OF PLANNING APPLICATION

2.1 The planning application comprises the following supporting documents:

- Application Form;
- CIL Form;
- Cover Letter;
- Planning Statement
- Drawing Pack;
 - Redline Site Plan (Scale 1:1250)
 - Existing Plans (Scale 1:100)
 - Proposed Plans (Scale 1:100)

2.2 As the proposal only relates to a change of use of existing floor space, a Design and Access Statement is not required.

3 APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

Site and Surrounding Area

- 3.1 The Site currently comprises a 6 storey (ground plus 5 floors and basement) building located within the LB Camden fronting High Holborn. The Site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. There are no nationally or locally listed buildings located on the Site, however the building is identified as a building of positive value within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011). The Site is also located within London's Central Activities Zone.
- 3.2 The Site benefits from a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6b which indicates excellent accessibility to public transports. The Site is serviced by a number of bus routes and is located approximately 250m east of Holborn Underground Station and 400m west of Chancery Lane Underground Station, serving Piccadilly and Central Lines.
- 3.3 The Site is located within a generally mixed use area with primarily retail and commercial services (Class A1 – A5) at ground floor with Offices Use Class B1 above.

Planning History

- 3.4 The following planning applications are relevant to the proposed development and detailed on Camden Council's online planning system as below:

Reference no.	Decision Date	Scheme
29990	Granted – March 1980	The installation of a temporary work standby diesel generator, at the rear, fronting whetstone Park, and the erection of a chain link fence enclosure and gate'
8600751	Granted – September 1986	Installation of new air handling equipment and new external louvres on ground and first floors as shown on drawing numbers HA 1366/2 3 5 6 8 9 and 10
PS9604178	Granted – December 1996	Use of the third floor for archive storage purposes
PS9704019	Granted - March 1997	Change of use of third floor to archive storage purposes, as shown on drawing Nos: ME1,A.101A and third floor plan
PSX0004964	Granted – October 2000	Replacement of existing ten glazed windows with louvre screens on south, east and west elevations, all at first floor level, as shown on drawing numbers; HCD1292/E.5242/A; HCD1293/ E.5242/A; HCD1294/E.5242/A; and Technical data sheet: Weatherite Air Conditioning

3.5 The following planning application is also considered relevant as it concerns the redevelopment of the adjacent building to west of the Site:

Reference no.	Address	Decision Date	Scheme
2013/3983/P	262-267 High Holborn London WC1V 7EE	Granted – April 2014	Construction of a roof extension and 8 storey rear extension following demolition of existing 7 storey rear block and top floor, change of use of part of the ground floor from retail (class A1) to office use (class B1), basement and first floor of the existing public house (class A4) to office use (class B1), and basement and ground floor of existing public house (class A4) to flexible shop/restaurant/bar (class A1/A3/A4) all with associated alterations to new shopfronts; replacement windows and roof top plant
2013/4051/P	55-57 High Holborn London WC1N 6DX	Granted – September 2013	Change of use at part 1st and 2nd floor levels from restaurant/bar (A3/A4) to office (B1). Alterations to the facades of the building to include refurbishment of south facade, installation of a new shopfront, window replacement to north, east and west facades, installation of new door at third floor level leading to new roof terrace with privacy screen and installation of plant with acoustic screen at roof level

Current Use

3.6 The existing building operates as set out within the following table.

Floor	Use	Floorspace (sqm)
Basement	Plant	1,617
Ground	Telephone Exchange and reception	1,311.6
First	Telephone Exchange	1,361.5
Second	Telephone exchange and ancillary offices	1,317.2
Third	BT Archives and ancillary offices	1,159.2
Fourth	Ancillary offices	917.9
Fifth	Plant	166.7

3.7 While an Office element currently exists on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors, this floorspace has been used in direct relation to the Telephone Exchange and is therefore considered to be ancillary to the building's established Sui Generis use.

4 APPLICATION PROPOSAL

Description of development

4.1 The proposed development is for:

“Change of Use from Telephone Exchange (Sui Generis) to Office (Use Class B1) at floors 1, 2 and 4 only”

4.2 Subject to the grant of planning permission, the Office floorspace at floors 1, 2 and 4 will be occupied by BT Plc’s property and finance departments.

4.3 Please refer to **Appendix A** for photos of the floors to which this application relates.

5 PLANNING POLICY SUMMARY

Planning Policy

5.1 The current Development Plan comprises:

- London Plan (2015);
- LBC Core Strategy (2010);
- LBC Development Policies (2010); and
- LBC Site Allocations (2013).

Other Material considerations include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012);
- LBC Planning Guidance; and
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011).

Site Designations

5.2 The Site is identified by the LBC Proposals Map as being subject to the following designations:

- London Central Activity Zone;
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area;
- Central London Frontage;
- Growth Area Holborn;
- London Suburbs Archaeological Priority Area; and
- Flood Zone Risk 1.

6 PLANNING POLICY APPRAISAL

6.1 Paragraph 18 of the NPPF states that:

“The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system”

6.2 **London Plan Policy 4.1** (Developing London’s Economy) and **Policy 4.2** (Offices) seek for development, including renewal and modernisation of existing office stock, which encourages the continued growth of a strong, sustainable and increasingly diverse economy, ensuring the availability of sufficient and suitable workspaces in terms of type, size and cost. The low carbon economy is highlighted as a priority.

6.3 **Core Strategy Policy CS1** (Distribution of Growth) states that Holborn is one of the locations where developments will be promoted to make Camden an attractive place. In doing so, the Council will encourage the efficient use of buildings by seeking development that makes full use of its site, taking into account quality of design, its surroundings, sustainability, amenity, heritage, transport accessibility and any other considerations relevant to the site.

6.4 **Core Strategy Policy CS2** (Growth Areas) states that altogether Growth Areas are expected to provide a substantial amount of new business floorspace by 2024/25. Developments within these areas are therefore expected to maximise opportunities whilst being in accordance with the Council’s expectations. With specific regard to Holborn, Policy CS2 states:

“The Council expects that the London Plan targets will be met through relatively small scale, private sector-led schemes, reflecting that the area’s potential for intensification is largely from the redevelopment of existing properties, particularly offices, at higher densities”.

6.5 **Core Strategy Policy CS8** (Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy) states that the Council will seek developments which offer a various range of employment facilities suitable for small and medium sized enterprises.

6.6 **Core Strategy Policy CS9** (Achieving a successful Central London) includes a range of criteria which include the aspirations to:

“b) support Central London as a focus for Camden’s future growth in homes, offices, hotels, shops and other uses;”

“f) take into account the specific identity of the areas within Central London when taking decisions on planning applications and in relevant initiatives and works;”

“i) preserve and enhance the area’s historic environment;”

Applicant’s Response

- 6.7 The proposal consists of the change of use of the first, second and fourth floors from Telephone Exchange (Sui Generis Use Class) to Offices (B1 Use Class).
- 6.8 The amount of space required for the operation of the Telephone Exchange at the Site has reduced due to BT Plc’s on-going process of consolidating its operations. As a result, the existing floorspace on the first, second and fourth floors has become surplus to the direct requirements of the Telephone Exchange and is currently underutilised.
- 6.9 To optimise the use of the floorspace, within this highly accessible location, the Applicant has decided to relocate its property and finance departments to the building. Whilst these operations are part of BT Plc, they are not directly associated with the Telephone Exchange operation that operates at the Site. As such, a change of use will establish use of the 1st, 2nd and 4th floors as offices and so enable these departments to lawfully operate under Use Class B1a.
- 6.10 The proposal will result in the currently underutilised space being brought back into full use, which will have a positive impact to the Holborn Growth Area. The change of use will therefore be in accordance with the London Plan targets which encourage and support economic growth by increasing the amount of suitable workplaces.
- 6.11 As mentioned above, the property is also within a highly accessible location within walking distance from Holborn (Central and Piccadilly Lines) and Chancery Lane (Central Line) stations. It is therefore considered to be a wholly sustainable location for access by future employees.
- 6.12 The proposed change of use is in accordance with all relevant London Plan and LBC policies. For further details, please refer to the plans submitted with the application.

Community Infrastructure Levy and Crossrail

6.13 The application does not include any net additional floorspace and so neither CIL or Crossrail apply.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by GL Hearn on behalf of British Telecommunications Plc to support an application at Holborn Telephone Exchange, 268-270 High Holborn, WC1V 7EE (the 'Site) for:

“Change of Use from Telephone Exchange (Sui Generis) to Office (Use Class B1) at floors 1, 2 and 4 only”

7.2 GL Hearn considers that this Application has addressed all relevant planning policies and material considerations relevant to the Site.

7.3 The proposals will deliver high quality office floorspace and will contribute towards LBC's aspirations for growth within the Holborn Area.

7.4 The proposed redevelopment complies with adopted Development Plan and we request that planning permission is granted.

APPENDIX A – PHOTOS OF RELEVANT FLOORS

1st floor – Telephone Exchange



2nd floor – Telephone Exchange and ancillary offices



4th floor – Ancillary offices

