

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		06/07/2018	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		21.6.18	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Charles Thuaire				2018/2317/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Kings Cross Square Kings Cross Station Euston Road London N1C 4TB				See decision notice			
PO 3/4		Area Team Signature		C&UD		Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)							
Installation of telecommunications apparatus comprising 2 cabinets alongside north elevation of tube station staircase canopy.							
Recommendation(s):		a) Prior Approval Required b) Approval Refused					
Application Type:		GPDO Prior Approval Determination					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
Summary of consultation responses:		Press advert and site notice displayed 25.5.18 to 21.6.18					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		<u>Kings Cross CAAC</u> - no response					

Site Description

Kings Cross Square in front of the station was laid out to replace the old southern concourse canopy, following approval for a landscaping scheme- see history. This new landscaped square includes- 2 reconfigured ventilation shafts with 2 small retail kiosks included, 2 reconfigured staircase canopies, a series of planting beds with integral seating on the western side, a series of benches and trees plus a Henry Moore statue on the eastern side alongside bus stops, and a wide open space of striped granite paving in the middle containing some benches and lampposts.

The Square adjoins Grade 1 listed Kings Cross and St Pancras stations and is within Kings Cross conservation area.

Relevant History

16.1.12- 2011/4782/P- approval granted for Details of hard and soft landscaping, lighting, Exit and Southeast Stair Canopies (adjacent to station facade), incorporating alterations to existing LUL structures and provision of additional retail kiosks, all relating to provision of new southern square between original station and Euston Road, pursuant to conditions 3, 17, 37a and 37d of planning permission 2006/3387/P granted 09/11/2007 for alterations, refurbishment and extensions to King's Cross Station to provide for new operational railway purposes and passenger facilities (including demolition of southern concourse and landscaping of new southern square).

Relevant policies

London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

Policy A1 Managing the impact of development

Policy D1 Design

Policy D2 Heritage

London Plan 2016

NPPF 2012

Assessment

1. Proposal-

1.1 The proposal involves the installation of telecommunications apparatus on and against the tube station staircase canopy on the south side of the square. It will comprise 1 equipment cabinet 1.9m wide, 1.5m high and 0.5m deep and 1 meter pillar 0.37m long, 0.87m high and 0.2m deep abutting the north elevation of the canopy set against its glazed façade; in addition there will be 2 antennas fixed to the top metal fascia cornice on the north side and likewise 2 antennas and 1 GPS module on the south side, plus a cable tray riser rising up on the north facade and crossing the roof to connect all antennas. The antennas, akin to small burglar alarm boxes, are permitted development by virtue of the GPDO but the cabinets are not as they are in a conservation area. The cabinets will be in standard light grey colour.

1.2 The proposal is part of a small cell system to upgrade and improve capacity for mobile phone coverage for the Kings Cross Station and Euston Rd area. It is to provide equipment for Vodafone and Telefonica as part of a sharing agreement.

1.3 The applicant is seeking prior approval for the siting and appearance of the equipment only. As a result it is not possible for objections to be raised on any other grounds, such as health. A decision needs to be made within 56 days of the application's receipt (18th May 2018). Thus if the applicant does not receive the Council's decision by 13th July 2018, the proposals will have deemed approval by default according to GPDO legislation.

2. Background-

2.1. The new cell antennas will provide enhanced coverage for both companies in this busy transport interchange and both companies have joined forces to share infrastructure. No coverage plots have

been provided as they will not adequately demonstrate the problem here where mobile phone usage is intense- coverage plots only show improved coverage, not improved capacity. The Kings Cross area needs adequate indoor dense urban coverage and new antenna are required to replace another existing site that has to be decommissioned. This site forms part of a wider plan across the area to develop and improve network coverage which will allow faster downloading and the reduction in call drop outs.

2.2 However, although the need for additional telecom equipment in the general area is not necessarily disputed, it is considered that inadequate justification has been given for the specific site proposed here. 5 alternative sites have been suggested- one is discounted due to inadequate coverage area which is accepted. However another site at Belgrove House opposite the Square is discounted 'in favour of the currently nominated option' and because it is next to a site 'which has to be removed due to redevelopment' (although no more details are given, no actual plans have been agreed for this site nor is there any guarantee that any permission will be forthcoming in the near future for anything here). The other 3 sites are discounted 'in favour of the chosen option based on its location in the street' (which is meaningless without further clarification). It is considered that inadequate reasoning has been given as to why these sites are not acceptable and why a site on the square itself is preferred.

2.3 The applicant has also declared that the equipment will comply with ICNIRP standards on emission levels and the antennae are oriented such that they do not directly face any residential premises. Thus the mast is not anticipated to have any direct impact on public health.

3. Design and heritage-

3.1 The square was carefully designed as a new landscaped space in front of the station after a high profile competition as part of the Kings Cross redevelopment programme. The intention was to remove redundant and ugly existing structures, create a new 'world class' square worthy of its setting in front of a Grade 1 listed station, and reveal the station's facade with minimal visual clutter in front. The square contains distinct groups of structures (canopies and shafts), seating and planting, an area for public art (presently occupied by the Henry Moore statue) and an open piazza with lighting columns and information boards. The location of these various elements was carefully designed to ensure smooth pedestrian throughflows. The paving, structures and street furniture are all coordinated in materials and design. The award-winning Square was carefully conceived and designed as a set piece and architectural entity fronting the two Grade 1 listed stations, as a result of a design competition some years ago. The various structures and surfaces have a common design idiom with clean uncluttered lines and uniform materials and with an integration of landscape, lighting and architecture. Both the Council and Network Rail have striven to remove previously existing visual clutter and resist additional clutter here.

3.2 It is considered that the proposed cabinets, antennas and cable trays on and next to the stair enclosure will create additional visual clutter and will detract from the simplicity and elegance of the structure. This stair enclosure was specifically designed for its purpose, matching the other enclosures on the square, and it is considered that retro-fitting it with unrelated external fixtures, which are not integrated within the design of the structure, is unacceptable. There is also a concern that allowing the equipment here will set an unwelcome precedent for further equipment by other telecom operators seeking to also upgrade their coverage on the Square. Although it is appreciated that the antennas are 'permitted development', they will disrupt the clear lines of the metal cornice which appears as an elegant exposed RSJ-like beam. The cable tray is particularly unfortunate and unattractive as it seems to be a separate riser, not fixed to the façade, that climbs up the structure in an ungainly manner and across the roof to reach the other south-facing antennas. The 2 cabinets are randomly located on the north side that partially mask the clear and solid glazed façades and are in non-matching materials and colours; this in contrast to the enclosure which, in common with all other square structures, is clad in dark charcoal grey coloured granite. Although of course the colour can be changed, it is difficult to see how the standard metal cabinets can be redesigned to match the granite cladding in materiality. In any case, their location and design are not integrated within the canopy's overall form and design.

3.3 Overall it is considered that the equipment creates additional unwelcome visual clutter on a high-profile square that has been specifically designed to a common design idiom and that the placing of large cabinets of a utilitarian design alongside the canopy harms the appearance and setting of the structure. It is considered that the proposal will harm the character and appearance of this part of Kings Cross conservation area and the setting of the adjoining listed building of Kings Cross station, both of which were enhanced by the removal of the old canopy and creation of a new purposely-designed Square. Thus the scheme is considered unacceptable both in principle and detail, both in terms of siting and design.

3.4 Special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and of preserving the listed building, its setting and its features of special architectural or historic interest, under s.66 and s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013

3.5 It would be preferable that any cabinets should be located on the outer edge of the public highway pavement south of this structure, near the existing news kiosk and bus stops where other small cabinets and utility equipment are evident. The antennas could be relocated discreetly onto the central ventilation shaft gridded box projecting above the canopy roof. The cables connecting the cabinets and antennas should be run underground and/or within the enclosure to mask their visibility.

4. Transport-

4.1 The cabinets will have no impact on pedestrian flows around the square as there is ample space to pass by the canopy.

5. Amenity-

5.1 The square does not immediately adjoin any residents so there will be no impact on neighbouring amenity.

6. Recommendation-

Refuse Prior Approval on grounds of unacceptable siting and design, as follows-

The proposed cabinets and associated antennas and cabling, by reason of their incongruous siting and utilitarian design, would create visual clutter and be detrimental to the appearance of the canopy enclosure and overall Square, the character and appearance of this part of the Kings Cross conservation area, and the setting of the adjoining listed building of Kings Cross station, contrary to policies D1 (design) and D2 (heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.