

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	18/07/2019
		N/A	Consultation Expiry Date:	14/07/2019
Officer		Application Number(s)		
Adam Greenhalgh		2019/2702/P		
Application Address		Drawing Numbers		
Pavement on Drake Street at junction with Procter St London WC1R 4SG		Refer to Decision Notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Installation of 1 x replacement telephone kiosk on the pavement.				
Recommendation(s):		Prior Approval Required – Approval Refused		
Application Type:		GPDO Prior Approval Determination		

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
			No. of responses	0	No. of objections	0
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was displayed on 19/06/2019 and this consultation expired on 13/07/2019</p> <p>An advert was displayed in the local press on 20/06/2019 with expiry on 14/07/2019.</p> <p>Transport Strategy objects as follows:</p> <p>The proposal to install a replacement telephone kiosk at the above site would re-introduce a significant physical and visual obstruction to an otherwise clear and unobstructed pedestrian environment. The proposal would fail to improve the pedestrian environment at the site. This is unacceptable in such a high footfall location in Central London. The proposal should be refused on this basis.</p> <p>The proposed telephone kiosk being located outside of the established street furniture zone, would encroach significantly into the effective footway width available for pedestrian movement (i.e. the pedestrian desire line), as per the existing situation. The proposed telephone kiosk would therefore obscure sightlines along the footway significantly while also constituting a significant impediment/obstruction to pedestrian movement along the pedestrian desire line. This would be a particular problem for pedestrians with visual impairments (e.g. blind and partially sighted) who rely on clear and unobstructed pedestrian routes. The proposed telephone kiosk would therefore constitute an unnecessary obstruction/impediment and a hazard for blind or partially-sighted people. The proposal should be refused on this basis.</p> <p>The proposed telephone kiosk, by being in a high footfall area, would have a detrimental impact on the walking experience due to a significant reduction in the level of service, as per the existing situation. It would lead to pedestrian congestion which could result in dangerous situations such as pedestrians walking in the carriageway and colliding with each other or vehicular traffic, or indeed with the telephone kiosk. The proposal should be refused on this basis.</p> <p>The proposed telephone kiosk would clearly have a significant impact on pedestrian amenity, comfort and safety, as per the existing situation. For these reasons, the proposal is considered contrary to Local Plan policies A1 and T1 and should be refused on this basis.</p> <p>It is also noted that the telephone unit would be orientated perpendicular to the kerbside. This differs from the existing Infocus Media telephone kiosks where the telephone units are orientated parallel to the kerbside. The Metropolitan Police has objected to the proposal on this basis as it would make users of the telephone unit more vulnerable to an incident of crime or anti-social behaviour due to not having clear sightlines along the footway in both directions.</p> <p>Please note that the Council is currently developing a Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme for the Holborn area. This includes proposals to transform the public realm on Drake Street / Procter Street, including the concept of widening the footways on both sides of the road. If this application were to be approved, it would be</p>					

extremely beneficial if a condition could be attached requiring the applicant to work with the Council to relocate the replacement kiosk to the new kerb line at no cost to the Council.

Metropolitan Police – Designing Out Crime Officer objects on the following grounds:

- The issues surrounding telephone kiosks and communication devices within the London Borough of Camden are numerous and as such have become magnets for crime and anti-social behaviour. The issues surrounding them range from the placement of prostitute cards, graffiti, public urination, criminal damage and a location where Class A drugs misuse can occur.
- The main reason why they are associated with crime and anti-social behaviour is because there is not the demand for their intended use anymore, as a result of the high number of the population owning a mobile phone.
- The new design does mitigate some of the faults of the existing design and does reduce the 'foot print' taking up space within the public realm. The canopy covering the main screen/handset though is not ideal though as a result of the small shelf positioned to one side. Any flat surface which is protected from the elements will be favourable for the preparation and taking of Class A drugs. Therefore I would advise that this is removed from the design to prevent this from occurring. I appreciate the canopy contains the solar panels but also does it need to be so large? Ideally it should offer protection for a short period of time whilst the device is in use but not for extended periods by someone who can just 'loiter' at the location. This should be addressed prior to any approval.
- Orientation (If approved) – Due to there being limited vision through the device I would suggest, if it can be achieved, that the screen/handset is positioned so that it faces oncoming traffic. This will mean extra natural surveillance will be on the device and will assist to reduce any anti-social behaviour that may occur.
- Emergency Button – Applicant is required to further explain how this will work and also explain if there is any mitigation in place to prevent misuse.
- Payment – Applicant is required to explain how calls and access to Wifi systems to be paid for as not clear within the 'Technical Specifications'. Issues have arisen with other 'communication devices' that provide free calls for users, namely the increase in people using the device to make contact with drug dealers and the associated problems this will bring to an area.
- Maintenance Strategy (If approved) – Applicant to supply details of how often the device is visited upon installation for cleaning and maintenance.
- Insufficient has been done to address the impact these devices have on the public realm or acknowledge their relationship with generating crime and anti-social behaviour within a location. At this location there will still be a reduction in width of footpath which if nothing was there would be a safe and secure location for pedestrian activity.

Site Description

The site is located on Drake Street / Procter Street (A40) which forms part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN). Camden Council is the highway authority, although it should be noted that Transport for London (TfL) has a duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to ensure that any development does not have an adverse impact on the SRN. The site is located in a high footfall area in Central London near Holborn station (London Underground). Pedestrian volumes are extremely high and are forecast to increase significantly when Crossrail services become operational (was due to be December 2018 but now forecast for the end of 2020) along with ongoing economic growth in Kings Cross and Central London. Pedestrian volumes are also forecast to increase significantly when High Speed 2 (HS2) services become operational.

The existing kiosk is located on the footway on the west side of Drake Street / Procter Street in close proximity to the signalised junction with Theobalds Road (A401) and the priority junction with Red Lion Square. The existing kiosk is not located in a recognised street furniture zone (it is the only bulky item of street furniture). The effective footway width adjacent to the existing kiosk has been measured at 2.2 metres. The kiosk is also located at the start point of a southbound bus lane.

The site lies opposite the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is not within the vicinity of any Listed Buildings.

Relevant History

Site history:

The application for prior approval for the existing kiosk was refused by the Council on 09/02/15 (2014/4609/P).

Neighbouring sites in WC1R:

No other applications for new telephone kiosks in WC1R submitted within last calendar year.

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

London Plan 2016

Draft New London Plan 2017

TfL's Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London (2010)

Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 Managing the impact of development
C5 Safety and Security
C6 Access
D1 Design
D2 Heritage
G1 Delivery and location of growth
T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG Design (2019) - Section 7 Designing safer environments
CPG Transport (2019) - Section 9 Streets and public spaces
CPG Access for all (2019)
CPG Amenity (2018)

Camden Streetscape Design Manual

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2017)

Assessment

1.0 Proposal

- 1.1 Confirmation is sought as to whether the installation of a telephone communication hub would require prior approval under Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO. The order permits the Council to only consider matters of siting, design and appearance in determining GPDO prior approval applications. The potential impact on crime and public safety are relevant considerations under siting, design, appearance and access.
- 1.2 The hub would measure 1.338m wide, 0.317m deep (with a 600mm deep protective canopy on the front) and 2.63m high. The effective footway width adjacent to the existing kiosk would be 2.2 metres. It would be 500mm from the carriageway.
- 1.3 The front would include a touch screen panel and handset under a protective cover and the rear would constitute a chain grey metal panel with images.

2 Legal Background

- 2.1 In the recent High Court decision in Westminster City Council V SSHCLG [2019] EWHC 176 (Admin) Ouseley J noted that the effect of the GDPO was that “the whole development for which prior approval is sought must fall within the Class relied on, and no part of it can fall outside it” ([37]) — in other words, “a proposed development falls outside [the GPDO], if part of it falls outside it” ([39]). Given that the kiosk in that case was partly for the purpose of advertising — and not wholly for the purpose of the operator’s network — it was held that it fell outside the terms of the GPDO. Accordingly, the Inspector erred in allowing the appeal against the refusal of prior approval and his decision was quashed ([48]). This decision confirms that telephone boxes which include advertising capabilities do not benefit from permitted development rights, on the basis that they serve a dual purpose. In this case, the proposals include a digital interactive screen and the size of the structure compared to the telecommunications equipment indicates that it has clearly been designed to accommodate a 6-sheet advertisement. On that basis, the proposed development is considered to fall outside the terms of the GPDO. Notwithstanding the fact the Council consider the development falls outside the terms of the GDPO for the sake of completeness an assessment of the proposals has been made.

3 Planning Assessment

- 3.1 Policy A1 of the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will seek to ensure development contributes towards strong and successful communities by balancing the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities, and that the Council will resist development that fails to adequately assess and address transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network. Paragraph 6.10 states that the Council will expect works affecting the highway network to consider highway safety, with a focus on vulnerable road users, including the provision of adequate sightlines for vehicles, and that development should address the needs of vulnerable or disabled users. Furthermore, Policy T1 point e) states that the Council will seek to ensure that developments provide high quality footpaths and pavements that are wide enough for the number of people expected to use them, including features to assist vulnerable road users where appropriate, and section 9.7 of the Transport CPG calls for ‘Avoiding street clutter and minimising the risk of pedestrian routes being obstructed or narrowed, e.g. by footway parking or by unnecessary street furniture.’

- 3.2 Camden’s Streetscape Design manual – section 3.01 footway width states the following:

- “Clear footway” is not the distance from kerb to boundary wall, but the unobstructed pathway width within the footway;
- 1.8 metres – minimum width needed for two adults passing;
- metres – minimum width for busy pedestrian street though greater widths are usually required;
- Keeping the footway width visually free of street furniture is also important, allowing clear sightlines along the street’.

- 3.3 All development affecting footways in Camden is also expected to comply with Appendix B of Transport for London’s (TfL’s) Pedestrian Comfort Guidance, which notes that active and high flow locations must provide a minimum 2.2m and 3.3m of ‘clear footway width’ (respectively) for the safe and comfortable

movement of pedestrians.

- 3.4 Policy T1 states that the Council will promote sustainable transport choices by prioritising walking, cycling and public transport use and that development should ensure that sustainable transport will be the primary means of travel to and from the site. Policy T1 points a) and b) state that in order to promote walking in the borough and improve the pedestrian environment, the Council will seek to ensure that developments improve the pedestrian environment by supporting high quality improvement works, and make improvements to the pedestrian environment including the provision of high quality safe road crossings where needed, seating, signage and landscaping.
- 3.5 Policy T1 (Public Transport) states that where appropriate, development will be required to provide for interchanging between different modes of transport including facilities to make interchange easy and convenient for all users and maintain passenger comfort.
- 3.6 Paragraph 9.7 of the Transport CPG seeks improvements to streets and spaces to ensure good quality access and circulation arrangements for all through:
- Ensuring the safety of vulnerable road users, including children, elderly people and people with mobility difficulties, sight impairments, and other disabilities;
 - Maximising pedestrian and cycle accessibility and minimising journey times making sites 'permeable'
 - Providing stretches of continuous footways without unnecessary crossings;
 - Making it easy to cross where vulnerable road users interact with motor vehicles;
 - Linking to, maintaining, extending and improving the network of pedestrian and cycle routes;
 - Maximising safety by providing adequate lighting and overlooking from adjacent buildings;
 - Taking account of surrounding context and character of the area
 - Providing a high quality environment in terms of appearance, design and construction, considering Conservation Areas and other heritage assets and using traditional materials (such as natural stone)
 - SuDS and planting (trees, pocket parks etc.) where appropriate
 - Investing in the public realm to create inclusive spaces that support greater social interaction (places to sit, sheltered, not too noisy, safe etc);
 - Use of paving surfaces which enhance ease of movement for vulnerable road users;
 - Avoiding street clutter and minimising the risk of pedestrian routes being obstructed or narrowed, e.g. by footway parking or by unnecessary street furniture and
 - Having due regard to design guidance set out in the Camden Streetscape Design Manual, TfL's London Cycling Design Standards, TfL's Pedestrian Comfort Level Guidance and TfL's Healthy Street Indicators
- 3.7 Policy C5 of the Camden Local Plan requires development to contribute to community safety and security, and paragraph 4.89 states that the design of streets needs to be accessible, safe and uncluttered, with careful consideration given to the design and location of any street furniture or equipment. With respect to telephone kiosks the Council's Design Planning Guidance (CPG) advises in Section 7.41: - 'In all cases we will request that the provider demonstrates the need for the siting of the new facility. We will consider whether kiosks add to the street clutter and if there are existing phone kiosks in the vicinity. In certain areas of the Borough, telephone boxes can be seen as providing opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour and in these areas we will consider whether the proposed location will have an impact on crime levels'. Section 7.42 continues 'All new phone boxes should have a limited impact on the sightlines from or of the footway and should not hamper pedestrian movement. The size of the structure that the phone box is in should be minimised to limit its impact on the streetscene and to decrease the opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. The remaining minimum footway width should comply with the Transport for London

4 Siting

- 4.1 The application site is on the approximately 4m wide pavement on the west side of Drake Street close to the junction with Theobald's Road (A401). Along this pavement there are no other private or utility companies' cabinets, columns or stands.
- 4.2 Section 3.01 of Camden's Streetscape Design Manual requires a minimum unobstructed pathway width within the footway, known as the 'clear footway'. This guidance and Appendix B of TfL's Pedestrian Comfort Guidance, outlines the recommended minimum footway widths for different levels of pedestrian flows.
- 4.3 The footprint of the proposed telephone communications hub measures 1.338m wide. Transport for London indicate that footways in high flow areas should be at least 5.3 metres wide. The proposed offset from the kerb of 0.5 metres would be acceptable. The plan also indicates that the resulting effective footway width would be reduced to 2.2 metres. The reduced effective footway width is contrary to the aforementioned guidance and is considered to be insufficient for a footway with high pedestrian flows in a Central London location. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies A1 and T1 and is considered unacceptable.
- 4.4 Policy A1 emphasises that it is important that development balances the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities and ties into the existing transport network. No justification has been submitted for the need to install a telecommunication hub at the location. Additionally, the proposed telecommunications hub is considered to be excessively wide such that it would have a significant impact on pedestrian comfort and movement. The resulting width of pavement, i.e. 2.2m, would be inadequate and would fail to provide sufficient space on this part of busy pavement such that there would be increased risks to safety for pedestrians.

5 Design and Appearance

- 5.1 Policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan aims to ensure the highest design standards for developments. Policy D1 states that the Council will require all developments to be of the highest standard of design and to respect the character, setting, form and scale of neighbouring buildings, its contribution to the public realm, and its impact on wider views and vistas.
- 5.2 Policy D2 states that the Council will resist development outside of a Conservation Area that causes harm to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 5.3 S.5.2.8 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement (2017) states: 'Development proposals must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This requirement applies equally to developments which are outside the Conservation Area but would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.'
- 5.4 Due to its design and appearance, it is considered that the proposed telecommunications hub would constitute an overly-sized and intrusive feature which would degrade the visual amenity and appearance of the area.
- 5.5 The telecommunications hub would be significantly wider than typical items of street furniture. The solid metal appearance of the kiosk with a 32" touch screen display, a projecting canopy, and solar panels would have a harmful and negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 5.6 The proposed structure is considered to be of a poor design in terms of size, scale and massing, and is not an appropriate or acceptable addition in this location. Its incongruous design would result in an obtrusive and intrusive piece of street furniture in this location detracting from the streetscene. Consequently, the proposed telecommunications hub would seriously affect the setting of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and would thus result in a significant harm to the wider streetscene. As such, the proposal would fail to adhere to Policies D1 and D2.
- 5.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) says that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and that they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. In this case there would be harm but it is considered that this would be less than substantial harm. In these circumstances the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals. No case has been made for the public benefit which would accrue from the proposal and which would potentially offset the harm that would

be caused to the appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.8 Special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, under s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (ERR) 2013.

6 Access

6.1 Policy C6 requires new buildings, spaces and facilities that the public may use to be fully accessible to promote equality of opportunity. The Council has concerns over the accessibility of the touch screen panel and handset for wheelchair users. However were the proposals to be considered acceptable, a condition could be imposed to ensure that the facility should be designed and retained for use by wheelchair users.

7 Anti-social behaviour

7.1 With regards to community safety matters, a number of issues have been raised by the Metropolitan Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor. In particular it has been noted that existing telephone kiosks within the London Borough of Camden have become 'crime generators' and a focal point for anti-social behaviour (ASB)

7.2 It is therefore considered that the design and siting of the proposal on this busy footway would introduce additional street clutter, as well as, increase opportunities for crime within a location where there are already safety issues in terms of crime and ASB, through reducing sight lines and natural surveillance in the area, and providing a potential opportunity for an offender to loiter. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies A1 and C5 of the Camden Local Plan and guidance contained within CPG (Design).

8 Conclusion

8.1 The proposal would result in unacceptable street clutter, harmful to the character, appearance and setting of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and streetscape, and to the detriment of pedestrian flows, as well as, creating issues of safety and increased potential for crime and anti-social behaviour. The proposal, by virtue of its siting and appearance, is considered unacceptable.

9 Recommendation

9.1 Refuse Prior Approval