

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	05/02/2020
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	N/A
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Thomas Sild			2019/6259/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
Central Cross 30 Tottenham Court Road London W1T 1BJ			Refer to decision notice.		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
Installation of 12 antenna apertures, 4 transmission dishes and 8 equipment cabinets with associated works to the roof					
Recommendation(s):		i) Prior Approval Required ii) Approval Refused			
Application Type:		GPDO Prior Approval Determination			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	0	No. of responses	0	No. of objections	0
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>No statutory consultation is required for prior approval applications. Usually the Council posts a site notice to inform those located near the development; however, in this instance no site notice was erected due to an administrative error. The Council did however notify the application through its electronic alters (e-alerts) system, which emails all those signed up for application notifications in the relevant area.</p> <p>The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association and the Charlotte Street Community Association were consulted before the determination of the application.</p>					
CAAC/Local groups comments:	No comments received at the time of the decision being made.					

Site Description

Central Cross is a large, purpose-built commercial building ranging in height from 12 storeys to 4, located on the west side of Tottenham Court Road.

The site adjoins the Hanway Street and Charlotte Street conservation areas and sits adjacent to Bloomsbury Conservation Area, to the north east.

Central Cross adjoins a number of listed buildings on Percy Street. The roof does not at present have telecommunications equipment and its roofscape is uncluttered other than a simple metal perimeter rail.

Relevant History

None relevant

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Sections 6 (Economy), 10 (Telecommunications), 12 (Well-designed places) and 16 (Historic environment)

London Plan 2016

Draft New London Plan (Intend to Publish version December 2019)

Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 (Managing the impact of development)

D1 (Design)

D2 (Heritage)

E1 (Economic development)

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG1 (Design) March 2018

CPG6 (Amenity) March 2018

CPG (Digital infrastructure) March 2018

Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development (November 2016)

Bloomsbury Conservation Area appraisal and management strategy (2011)

Charlotte Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008)

Hanway Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011)

Assessment

1.0 Proposal

- 1.1 The application has been submitted under Part 16 of schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (GPDO) 2015 (as amended). The GPDO sets out the details in regard to the type of development for which planning permission is 'deemed' to be granted, more commonly known as 'permitted development'. Under part 16 condition A3 (3) of the GPDO, before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the development.
- 1.2 The proposal lists the development as the installation as 12 antenna apertures, 4 transmission dishes and 8 equipment cabinets with associated works to the roof. All equipment would be sited on the tallest part of Central Cross, understood to be 12th floor level.

2.0 Applicant's justification

- 2.1 The proposals are intended to upgrade telecommunications equipment in relation to 5G coverage.
- 2.2 The applicants have declared that the proposed equipment would comply with International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) standards on emission levels in accordance with government guidelines. Members of the public cannot unknowingly access areas close to the antennas where exposure may exceed the guidelines. Therefore, the equipment is not anticipated to have any direct impact on public health.
- 2.3 There would be no materially harmful impacts on residential amenity in terms of loss of light or outlook.

3.0 Siting and appearance

- 3.1 Central Cross is an imposing mid-20th century development which has been refurbished in recent years. The roofline view from street level at present is almost entirely uncluttered, with only the appearance of a perimeter metal rail noted.
- 3.2 Local Plan Policy D2 (Heritage) states that the Council will resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area. The Council will also resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.
- 3.3 The proposed elevation indicates 5 large telecoms structures ranging between 4.2m and 6.3m in height above the existing plant room roof tops. There are an additional two groups of equipment at a height of 1.9m and 2.8m.
- 3.4 Central Cross has a distinctive geometric architectural style with long balcony components giving a strong horizontal emphasis. The roofline is characterised by its clean chamfered edges, contributing to its special character. The scale and siting of the proposed equipment would be highly prominent on top of the building, located adjacent to the parapet edge, cluttering the rooftop and compromising the building's visual aesthetic.
- 3.5 The site sits alongside Hanway Street Conservation Area to the south, Charlotte Street Conservation Area to the north, as well as being in close proximity to Bloomsbury Conservation Area to the north east. The proposed telecommunications equipment would be highly noticeable against the skyline and clearly visible from close and long public views. The antennas would upset the largely uniform and uncluttered roofscape when viewed from

within the conservation areas along Tottenham Court Road and Bayley Street. As such the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the special character of the surrounding conservation areas.

3.6 Photograph 1. Shows the view of Central Cross from Bayley Street within Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Other than simple handrails, the roofline is uncluttered which contributes to building's geometric architectural qualities:



3.7 Photograph 2: Shows the view from the south from the edge of the Charlotte Street Conservation Area:



- 3.8 It has been noted that no consideration has been made to enhance the host building or adjacent conservation areas by siting apparatus sympathetically or including screening which may soften the appearance from street level, and to address the requirements of Section 10 (Telecommunications) of the NPPF (2019).
- 3.9 It is accepted that telecommunications equipment by the nature of their functional design and aesthetic may not blend seamlessly with an existing building, however, it is considered that the location, scale, height and design of the proposed equipment would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building, local views and the character and appearance of the adjacent conservation areas.

4 Planning balance

- 4.1 Considerable importance has been attached to any harm to designated heritage assets, and special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the adjacent Charlotte Street, Hanway Street and Bloomsbury Conservation Areas, under s.72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (ERR) 2013.
- 4.2 Camden Local Plan Policy D1, in conjunction with Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF (2019) which seeks to preserve and enhance heritage assets, states that the Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
- 4.3 Given the assessment as outlined in sections 1-3 of this report, it is considered that the proposed telecommunications equipment would result in harm to the appearance of the host building as well as the character and appearance of the Charlotte Street, Hanway Street and Bloomsbury Conservation Areas. It is recognised that the proposed scheme would result in advancements in telecommunications network coverage, and as such, some public benefit would be derived from the scheme. Although officers acknowledge that the proposals would lead to some public benefit, alternatives have not been adequately demonstrated such as exploring whether a reduced (i.e. less harmful) scheme could take place with similar benefits nor if alternative sites have been sufficiently considered. Notwithstanding this, when weighing the harm caused as a result of the development against the public benefit, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Section 16 of the NPPF (2019) which seeks to preserve heritage assets.
- 4.4 The proposal would therefore fail to accord with policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017, and Section 16 of the NPPF (2019), The development would result in visually intrusive rooftop clutter in a prominent siting, detrimental to the appearance of the host building, local views from the street and to the character and appearance of the Charlotte Street, Hanway Street and Bloomsbury conservation areas.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 Approval Required – Approval refused on grounds of unacceptable location, scale, height and design.