


Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2020/2015/P	Covent Garden Community Association 	21/06/2020 00:04:14	OBJNOT	<p>Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA) objects to the proposed development</p> <p>We do not oppose the siting of necessary telecommunications equipment in the St. Giles area per se. But we do oppose it at this site.</p> <p>We would also oppose it in its current unattractive form at many sites in the historic part of our capital city.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>The applicant cites an appeal decision allowing a mast site in Winchester in 2018 (Appeal Ref: APP/L1765/W/18/3197522). The inspector's key point was that he had no evidence to suggest that there is a more viable option than the appeal site for the required facility. This is also key here. We would suggest that the answer in this case is that there are very possibly more options, and that a site other than the one proposed, albeit not far from it, should be chosen in this case.</p> <p>We would cite a contrary appeal decision that refused similar telecoms equipment in on top of the the Westbury Hotel in Conduit Street in 2019 (Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/W/19/3235853). The effect of the proposal was judged to cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.</p> <p>We also support the letter from lawyers representing the owners of 1 St Giles High Street and filed with Planning Application ref. 2020/1647/P. This makes the case for no application on this building benefiting from Prior Development rights, due to the planning conditions attached to the building itself. We therefore ask Camden as the LPA to pursue its right to refuse 2020/2015/P outright.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Our first criterion for choice of an alternative site would be one already used by other telecommunications providers. The applicant states that there is currently no coverage for Vodafone and Telefonica in this busy location within the capital. However, if there is coverage for other service providers then we ask that the Vodafone and Telefonica equipment be positioned alongside their equipment. We would like to see appropriate maps so that we can make meaningful comments about this. The obvious benefit would be that only one site would be compromised, rather than two. Could you ask the applicant for maps, please?</p> <p>Our second criterion for choice of an alternative site would be one that does not involve loss of residential amenity. The roof of Matilda House is not such a site. As the planning officer acknowledges in this pre-application advice, residents suffer from installation work and any comings and goings in relation to ongoing maintenance. They also lose the possibility of using their own roof for recreation, which is something that we understand the Matilda House residents committee is discussing with the buildings owner. Finally, people have an understandable fear of bringing up their families in close proximity to high frequency signals; whether or not it is found in time that there is a direct impact on physical health, such fears still damage mental health.</p> <p>Our third criterion for choice of an alternative site would be one that does not harm the character and appearance of surrounding conservation areas. As the applicants photographs show, the roof of Matilda House is in clear view from parts of all 3 conservation areas - more so than many nearby buildings because it</p>

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is on the very edge of the Renzo Piano development. The utilitarian appearance of this equipment in this location cannot fail to detract from the building itself and harm the conservation areas.

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We support the council's comments regarding the era of 5G telecoms providing a great opportunity for 'creativity with regards to visual appearance' of equipment, in the same spirit as Giles Gilbert Scott's red telephone boxes. We urge the applicant to rise to the challenge, albeit at an alternative site in this case.

One could also take the 'disguise' approach of other countries; for example in Portugal masts have been moulded to look like trees, and at a distance are very effective.

A third alternative would be better screening. We might have suggested planting, but note that the effects of trees on signal degradation can be significant. Screening could instead be man-made to allow signals through, but be elegantly designed or disguised as something more appealing.

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