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| Delegated Report | | Analysis sheet | | Expiry Date: | | 26/08/2020 | |
| (Refusal) | | N/A | | Consultation Expiry Date: | | 15/08/2020 | |
| Officer | | | | Application Number(s) | | | |
| Josh Lawlor | | | | 2020/3008/P | | | |
| Application Address | | | | Drawing Numbers | | | |
| Monmouth House Raglan Street London NW5 3BX | | | | See Decision Notice | | | |
| PO 3/4 | | Area Team Signature | | C&UD | | Authorised Officer Signature | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Proposal(s) | | | | | | | |
| Installation of 12 pole mounted antennas (2 each on 6 poles), 6 cabinets, 4 dishes and 1 GPS antenna at roof level, plus 1 ground based meter cabinet and associated works. | | | | | | | |
| Recommendation(s): | | a) Prior Approval Required b) Approval Refused | | | | | |
| Application Type: | | GDPO Prior Approval Determination | | | | | |

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| Conditions or Reasons for Refusal: | Refer to Decision Notice | | | | | |
| Informatives: | | | | | | |
| Consultations | | | | | | |
| Adjoining Occupiers: | No. notified | 0 | No. of responses | 19 | No. of objections | 19 |

**Summary of
consultation
responses:**

4 site notices were displayed near to the site from the 22/07/2020. Two site notices were displayed on Raglan Street, one outside the application building and the 2nd further along near no. 20 Raglan Street. One Site notice was displayed on Kentish Town Road near the passage named Crown Place. One site notice was displayed on Holmes Road. The consultation expired on 15/08/2019.

19 objections have been received from separate addresses on Wiles Road, Alma Street, Patshull Road, Raglan Street and Inkerman Road

Design and conservation - 10 out of the 19 objections raised concerns relating to design and heritage:

1. The number of heavy equipment pieces, aerials and bulky gear which would be visible on the skyline for a considerable distance is both unacceptable and excessive. The building is adjacent to a conservation area and would have a considerable impact on the visual amenity.
2. Monmouth House is directly behind my residence at 13 Holmes Rd, visible from all the rear windows and from the patio garden. The masts would dominate the area, which contains many low-rise houses, and parts of which are a conservation area. Recently the Council ordered the removal off a number of communication masts from a building on Kentish Town Rd. adjacent to Monmouth House, and it would be illogical if they were to be replaced by even more, bigger, constructions on top of a much taller building.
3. This is adjacent to a conservation area and in a part of the borough that has to work particularly hard to soften the edges of urban living and create living spaces that feel safe and welcoming to us and to those who pass through. The masts would be visually intrusive, a permanent reminder of the risk to our health, and an eyesore.
4. The masts would overlook a playground, causing a loss of that amenity to the residents of high rise flats.
5. This is adjacent to conservation area, and that masts will turn an unattractive building into an eyesore.
6. It is adjacent to a conservation area and will be an unsightly addition to this residential neighbourhood. I would like to draw your attention to a quote from the developers who state they have rejected other possible sites on the grounds that '*The site is adjacent to a conservation area and is considered to have a greater impact on visual amenity than the proposed site*'. I disagree that Monmouth House is a better alternative to another site in a conservation area. Monmouth House itself is adjacent to and already towers above the Inkerman Conservation Area so the impact on visual amenity by the addition of radio masts will be immense. I hope you will reject this application on the grounds of respect for our conservation area.

7. The tower dominates Raglan Street and Alma Street, both of which are in the Inkerman Conservation Area. I note that the applicant states that other sites that they considered were rejected on the basis that they were adjacent to a conservation area. It is therefore bewildering that they are applying to put this huge telecoms development on a site which will tower over the Inkerman Conservation Area.
8. Monmouth House is right next to and overlooks the historic Raglan St, part of the Inkerman Conservation Area with connections to the Crimea War - hence the name Raglan St. An unsightly and extensive array of humming electrical equipment on the roof of Monmouth House including 12 antennae, 6 poles, 6 cabinets, 4 dishes and a GPS unit as well as a ground based cabinet will form a hideous and noisy mass and detract from the current beauty, peace and tranquillity of Raglan St and its various gardens for passers-by in the conservation area. It may well encourage increased antisocial behaviour instead. This is in circumstances where residents of the conservation area are not allowed to change their windows or doors etc. without permission.
9. We are in a conservation area and it is unsightly
10. This solid high rise building is tall enough and added masts will be a detriment. I live in a conservation area and this monstrosity will be totally out of place. I suggest if these masts are essential consideration should be given to erecting them in a more non-residential area, like parts of Holmes Road etc.

Officer response to points 1-10 above:

1. *Please see section 3 Siting and design below.*

Heath and amenity impacts - 12 out of the 19 objections included concerns relating to Heath and amenity:

1. The effect of this concentration of energy would be a health hazard to both residents and the local School nearby. There are other technology ways that would avoid such permanent damage to the environment that this proposal would cause. We have children live in the building and have playground for children and have concern about their safety. The best place for tower would a commercial place away from residential place.
2. I live in Monmouth house and I don't want this installation happen in our building. We have children live in the building and have playground for children and have concern about their safety. The best place for tower would a commercial place away from residential place.
3. I am anxious about the potential health hazard caused by raised levels of radiation. We are a mixed community of elderly people and of families with very young children. Our area already experiences high levels of environmental pollution from the volume

of traffic passing through and this would increase the risks in a densely populated area.

4. The works are likely to be disruptive and despite the fact that you don't take into account health concerns I am recovering from cancer and I do believe that is a health hazard too which causes me huge anxiety
5. It causes anxiety and potential (well documented) health risks. We suggest that the Regis Road industrial area would be an appropriate site for this kind of installation. Surely there are commercial / industrial properties available before choosing residential areas, where it causes anxiety and potential (well documented) health risks
6. The masts would overlook a playground, causing a loss of that amenity to the residents of high rise flats. I would be very anxious about exposing my grandson to the health risks caused by this proposal. In addition the masts are next door to a primary school. The children are already exposed to polluted air from the adjacent road and their exposure to health pollutants would be increased.
7. I live in the property and it is as yet unknown the dangers/harm having a mast like that on our building will cause.
8. I believe it is a radiation health hazard to the people living in Monmouth House, and the surrounding area, which includes a primary school. The purpose of 5g is to enable a greater volume of wireless traffic which increases the health hazard.
9. Exposure to electromagnetic radiation from 5G , which has potential hazards for human health - Monmouth House residents; for those, like me, living in a surrounding street; and the adjoining Saint Patrick's Primary School.
10. It is by no means guaranteed that phone masts are safe and a residential block is not an appropriate place to site them.
11. I am not entirely sure that it is wholly safe to have such a massive 5G installation so very close to a primary school of some 250 very young children.
12. Continual and antisocial humming sound that the equipment will cause, with consequent disturbance to residents, especially at night. As a resident of Raglan St, I have been wrangling for many years with Nandos on Anglers Lane because of the humming noise caused overnight by their electrical equipment resulting in my disturbed and lost sleep. I do not want further such antisocial activity intruding upon my life.

Officer response to points 1-12:

1-11. *This prior approval is assessed by the local planning authority (LPA) in terms of siting and design, not in terms of potential health impacts. Notwithstanding this, the applicant has declared that all of the proposed equipment would comply with International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) standards on emission levels. Thus, the equipment is not*

anticipated to have any direct impact on public health. It is also noted that there is limited, if any, evidence of links to health risks - and there is no reason to think the actual signal strength would pose any more harm than having WiFi, a mobile phone, house alarm, TV or other such electrical equipment at home.

12 There is no evidence of noise disturbance caused by the operation of telecommunications equipment, and this is not a factor that can be considered in the prior approval process.

**Inkerman Area
Residents
Association**

We are the Inkerman Area Residents Association which includes and is largely made up of streets within the Inkerman Conservation Area (CA). One side of Raglan Street is in the CA and Monmouth House is therefore just on the edge of it. This 12 storey tower is the highest building in the area and is visible across many of our streets. It particularly dominates Raglan Street, Inkerman Road and Alma Street. The proposed installation is extraordinarily large and would be extremely oppressive for the school, for all residents and for the thousands of people passing through the area every day.

We note that the applicant has rejected 5 other sites on the grounds that:

"The site is adjacent to a conservation area and is considered to have a greater impact on visual amenity than the proposed site."

As Monmouth House is immediately adjacent to a conservation area it is hard to see why the applicant thinks it should not also have been rejected as a potential site.

We had previously suggested to the applicant that they should instead be considering a non-residential area, such as Regis Road, and certainly not a site adjacent to the CA.

Our area also includes St. Patrick's school, just opposite Monmouth House and some of our residents have expressed considerable anxiety about the possibility of having this installation so close to the school.

Please reject this inappropriate application.

Officer response:

1. *Please see section 2 Justification and section 3 Siting and design below.*

The below photos show what happened the last time the roof of Monmouth House was targeted by the mobile phone giants as a possible site for a 5G base station. Masts that had been illegally installed on the roof of a solicitor's office that backed on to the main green of our estate were going to be relocated. In April 2019 we were the target for that relocation. An application was made. Those masts were eventually relocated to a commercial premises just to the north of the main entrance to Regis Road industrial Estate. The events of April 2019 set a precedent.

**Raglan Estate
Tenants and
Residents
Association (TRA)**





This 5G equipment clearly does not have to be placed on top of a residential building, and certainly not one that is only a few yards from St Patrick's primary school. Monmouth House is also clearly visible from the Inkerman conservation area. This would clearly also apply to all the 5G equipment that this application seeks to install on our roof. Such an installation would surely have a seriously detrimental effect on the Inkerman conservation area because it would be such an eyesore, and the law on the installation of such equipment clearly states that you must take account of such factors when considering any such application. No doubt this was a key reason why the previous application targeting Monmouth House in April 2019 did not go through. Nothing has changed since then. I can only assume that this is a different mobile phone giant this time, and they are ignorant both of what happened last time and of the law regarding the protection of conservation areas.

In conclusion, nothing has changed since the last such application to install 5G equipment on the Monmouth House roof failed in April 2019. This new application needs to be swiftly dismissed, only this time with the added ruling that no future such applications for the Raglan Estate will be allowed.

Officer response:

1. *Please see section 2 Justification and section 3 Siting and design below.*

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Site Description

The application relates to a block of flats, 13 storeys in height; although not holding significant architectural merit the building is highly prominent within the townscape and is characterised by strong flat rooflines, unmarked by the presence of paraphernalia. At roof level there is a single storey plant room which is set back from the roof edges.

The building is set within a substantially soft-landscaped site and it dates from the later part of the 20th century. Although the site is not within a conservation area, it is adjacent to both the Inkerman Conservation Area (approx. 28m distance) and the Bartholomew Estate Conservation Area (approx. 98m distance) so would be visible from within these designated heritage assets.

Relevant History

Planning Application History

2017/2375/P Installation of 8 no. high speed internet antennas to the rooftop of the building **Granted 30/06/2017**

2020/0545/PRE Installation of telecoms equipment **Pre-application advise issued 02/05/2020**

Relevant Enforcement History

265 - 267 Kentish Town Road NW5 2TP

EN17/0611 unauthorized installation of communications antennae along with associated fixings and cabling on the flat roof of the commercial building.

Enforcement notice served 09/04/2018

Appeal dismissed under ref. APP/X5210/C/18/3199851 ref. APP/X5210/C/18/3201008 dated 09/11/2018

In dismissing the appeal the Inspector found that:

- The development is highly incongruous when set against the design of the host building and has a harmful effect of the character of the building and surrounding area
- No attempt appears to have been made to mitigate the harm either through location of the development or its external appearance
- Little information has been presented with regards to the alternative site search that was carried out prior to the decision to develop the appeal site

Equipment removed and enforcement notice complied with 26/11/2019

Relevant policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 –
Chapter 10 Supporting high quality communications

London Plan 2016, consolidated with alterations since 2011,
Intended to publish London Plan 2019

Camden Local Plan 2017

Policy D1 Design

Policy D2 Heritage

Policy A1 Managing the impact of development

Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan 2016

Policy D3 - Design principles

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG Design (2019)

CPG Amenity (2018)

CPG Digital Infrastructure (2018)

Assessment

1. Proposed Development

- 1.1 The proposal involves new telecom equipment on the main flat roof of the tower block. It would comprise six x 6m high poles fixed to the plant room, each holding a pair of antennas 2m high, totalling 12, facing north, west, east and south; in addition, there are 6 cabinets, 4 dishes and 1 GPS antenna. The poles and cabinets would be in standard grey colour.
- 1.2 The proposed development would provide improved 2G, 3G, 4G and new 5G coverage to the surrounding area. The proposal is part of a sharing agreement or joint venture by Cornerstone Telefonica UK Ltd and Vodafone Ltd
- 1.3 To clarify, 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.

2. Justification

- 2.1. The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to keep the number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations to a minimum, consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and to provide reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are

required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

- 2.2. The supplementary support information states that new site will provide replacement and enhanced 2G, 3G and 4G coverage for Cornerstone Telefonica UK Ltd and Vodafone Ltd. The document states that *'the site is required to help fill the 2G, 3G and 4G coverage loss following the decommissioning of the existing site at Salter Rex Estate Agents, 265/227 Kentish Town Road'*. The Council note that the site never benefited from planning permission, see enforcement history above ref. EN17/0611.
- 2.3. Despite the site at 265/227 Kentish Town Road not being lawful, it is not disputed that there is a need for enhanced coverage, particularly for enhanced 4G and 3G coverage in and around Kentish Town. This is demonstrated by the submitted plot coverage maps within the Supplementary Information document (SSSI) page 8 shows '4G coverage' with the unlawful 'Rex' site removed. Notably the coverage plots show that this residential area has only rural or in-car coverage, whereas the proposal results in improved indoor urban or dense urban coverage. In terms of 3G coverage, there is an improved coverage with urban indoor and suburban outdoor which would be enhanced to dense urban reception. Coverage maps have not been provided for 2G, although the need for replacement telecom equipment here is therefore considered to be justified.
- 2.4. The NPPF requires consideration to be had of siting proposed equipment on existing masts in the area and requires the overall numbers of masts to be kept to a minimum required for efficient network operation. CPG Digital Infrastructure (March 2018) encourages the use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new telecoms equipment proposals. As part of the site search in the supporting documentation (SSSI page 15-16), the applicants have referenced 7 other sites and buildings, but states that these are considered *'unavailable, unsuitable for radio coverage or inappropriate as the equipment would result in greater visual impact than the currently proposed one'*. The information that has been presented with regards to the alternative site search is not considered to be comprehensive or sufficiently detailed. A number of sites have been discounted for the same reason: *'the building is low rise and has a slightly pitched construction. The site is therefore not suitable for a telecommunications base station'*. This issue is not considered insurmountable and it is not clear why a number of sites cannot be chosen, each providing a smaller quantity of telecoms equipment. Utilizing a number of sites with a reduced number of poles and antennas would likely mitigate the design and heritage impacts while still providing enhanced signal coverage. It is considered that the alternative site search that was carried out prior to the decision to develop the site does not prove beyond doubt that there are no suitable sites which could be explored.
- 2.5. The developer has submitted technical information stating that the proposed telecommunication equipment would accord with all relevant legislation and as such would not cause interference with nationally significant electrical equipment such as air traffic services.
- 2.6. UK Government Research in the Stewart Report (2000) advocated a precautionary approach to telecommunications development and identified that children are more susceptible to telecommunications radiation. The NPPF does not make reference to the precautionary approach directly, but does carry forward the principle of the consideration of the siting of masts close to

schools through the requirement for developers to pre-consult with local schools. The applicant has carried out consultation with St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, a pre-application consultation letter and drawings were sent on the 26/04/2019. At the date of submission no response was received.

2.7. The NPPF states that the LPA should not determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure provided an ICNIRP certificate has been submitted. The applicant has declared that all of the proposed equipment would comply with International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) standards on emission levels. The antennae are so high that they do not directly face any residential premises or habitable windows. Thus the mast is not anticipated to have any direct impact on public health. There will be no impact on residential amenity in terms of loss of light or outlook.

3. Siting and design

3.1. The cabinets are setback from the edge and are typical utilitarian grey metal box structures to be found on rooftops. They would not be visually prominent from within the public realm, thus it is considered that the proposed cabinets are not obtrusive in terms of their siting, size or design.

3.2. The 12 antennas, 2 each on 6 poles, would be very visible from a number of places at street level. The antenna would be located in 6 sets of pairs on the north-west, north, east, south-east, south-west and west. The antenna are proposed to be fixed on the plant roof which is already visible from ground level. The equipment would be particularly visible from Raglan Street, Inkerman Road and Alma Street which are within the Inkerman Conservation Area. In terms of the Bartholomew Estate Conservation Area the equipment would be visible from Caversham Road, and where Gaisford Street meets Kentish Town Road. The antennas mounted on poles would be fixed to each elevation of the plant room. The number, height and location of these poles would make the equipment very prominent. It is considered that the number of the antennas on poles results in a proliferation of visual clutter on the roof of the host building. No justification has been given as to why so many antennas are required, with several pairs of antennas facing almost the same direction.

3.3. The telecoms equipment would be installed in scaffolding style rig structures to house the antennas. The 4.6m height of the poles is considered excessive as the bases of antennas are over 2m above the rooftop. The fixing of the poles to the plant room does not reduce the amount of poles or the visual impact of the equipment. The antennas would rise over the plant room which would alter the roof form in longer views. The submitted photomontages are not a verified view and are not considered to provide an accurate representation of what the equipment would look like from ground level. The proposed elevations show that the development would be incongruous when set against the design of the host building and would lead to harmful impact on the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area. Officers note that the '*8 no. high speed internet antennas to the rooftop*' granted under ref. 2017/2375/P dated 30/06/2017 had far less impact on the appearance of the building and wider townscape. These antenna are of a modest size, which would not significantly disrupt the otherwise clean roofline of the building when viewed from ground level.

- 3.4. As noted in the site description above, the host building itself as well as the surrounding estate is not considered by officers to have architectural merit, but is highly prominent (due to the building's height and location) within the townscape and surrounding Inkerman Conservation Area and Bartholomew Estate Conservation Area. The application building is characterised by strong flat rooflines that are currently uncluttered by other plant or equipment. It is considered that such a proliferation of very high poles with pairs of antennas would result in excessive scattered visual clutter on this tower roof and would disrupt its clean roofline thus harming the character and appearance of the building and surrounding estate.
- 3.5. The currently proposed 4.6m height of antennas would ensure that downward radio signals are not clipped by the roof parapet edge. However it is contended that the antennas could be lowered and still allow an uninterrupted radio reception sightline, particularly as the tower is higher than its surrounding buildings (meaning no intervening obstructions if the antenna were positioned lower). Furthermore, their location results in them being very prominent, although it is acknowledged that the plant room does not allow a setback position which would significantly reduce their prominence.
- 3.6. The submitted SSSI Page 11 lists reasons why the Councils pre-application advise for an alternative designs was not implemented. The Council accept that a number of the options may not be feasible, although it appears that some options have not been thoroughly investigated. For instance the suggested reduction in antenna height and number was discounted with the statement that *'twelve antennas are needed here to provide 2G, 3G and 4G coverage for both operators, as well as new 5G thus a reduction in antenna numbers as suggested in the delegated report is not possible.'* This is not considered satisfactory, a reduction in antenna number and height could still provide improved 3G and 4G coverage. Similarly it is considered that the option for a freestanding antenna on the plant room has not been adequately explored. The SSSI Page 11 simply states that *'in accordance with LPA feedback this option was rejected in favour of pole mounted antenna attached to the plant room.* This option has not been investigated, potentially one tower mast with a reduced height, could host all the required antennas to maintain a 360 degree coverage. This could be placed centrally on plant room of the block which would create a central visual design feature whilst maintaining the flat rooflines of the surrounding lower elements.
- 3.7. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2019) states that 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'. The proposal would result in 'less than substantial harm' to the character, appearance and historic interest of the adjacent Inkerman and Bartholomew Estate Conservation Areas. There would be some public benefit created as a result of the proposal as a result of improved 2G, 3G and 4G coverage in an area of need, although this is considered to be limited and would not outweigh the harm to the designated heritage assets (i.e. the conservation areas) identified above.
- 3.8. In conclusion, in the absence of sufficient justification of the current proposal's design, it is considered that the antennas and poles, by virtue of their excessive number and height and their prominent siting, would result in a proliferation of harmful visual clutter which would be

unattractive and over-dominant on the building and in the wider townscape and adjacent Inkerman Conservation Area and Bartholomew Estate Conservation Area.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Prior Approval Required – Approval refused on grounds of unacceptable siting and design.