

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		29/10/2020	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		26/10/2020	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Sofie Fieldsend				2020/4000/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
172 to 202 Maiden Lane London NW1 9UQ				See decision notice			
PO 3/4		Area Team Signature		C&UD		Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)							
Installation of telecommunications equipment comprising 6 antennas on 3 support poles, 4 dishes and 8 equipment cabinets at roof level and 1 electrical meter cabinet installed at ground level with associated works							
Recommendation(s):		Refuse full planning permission					
Application Type:		Full planning permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		A site notice was displayed on the 02/10/2020 and the consultation period expired on the 26/10/2020. No responses received during the consultation period.					

Site Description

The application building is five storey detached postwar block and the site is located on the south side of Maiden Lane. The building is occupied by residential flats (Class C3) and there are no existing telecommunications equipment at roof level. The rear of the site overlooks the railway line.

The building is not listed or located within a Conservation Area.

Relevant History

Application site

2019/4755/P - Installation of telecommunications equipment comprising 12x antenna apertures on 3x support poles, 4x dishes and 8x equipment cabinets at roof level and 1x electrical meter cabinet installed at ground level with associated works - **Refused 29/5/20**

Reason for refusal:

“The proposal, by reason of the location, scale, height and design, would result in visual rooftop clutter which would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property and wider streetscene, contrary to policy D1 (Design) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017 and paragraph 113 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.”

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

London Plan (2016)

Intend to publish London Plan (2019)

Camden's Local Plan (2017)

- A1 - Managing the impact of development
- D1 - Design
- D2 – Heritage
- T1 - Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

Supplementary Guidance

- CPG Design (2019)
- CPG Amenity (2018)
- CPG Digital infrastructure (2018)

Assessment

1. Proposal

1.1 The proposal involves the installation of telecommunications equipment comprising 6 antennas on 3 support poles, 4 dishes and 8 equipment cabinets at roof level and 1 electrical meter cabinet installed at ground level with associated works

1.2 The existing roof level of the building is 13.5m (approximate) above ground level. The top of the highest proposed mounting pole, at approx. 5.5m high, would result in an overall maximum height above ground level of approximately 19m. The proposed equipment cabinet at ground floor would be located at the front of the building facing Maiden Lane

1.3. There is no existing telecoms equipment at roof level.

2.0 Assessment

2.1 The main considerations in relation to this proposal are:

- Design
- Amenity

2.2 The main differences from the previously refused scheme ref. 2019/4755/P are:

- Reduction from 12 to 6 antenna apertures

2.3 The other proposed equipment remains the same as previous, the overall height is the same and 3 support poles are still proposed.

3.0 Design

3.1 Local Plan Policy D1 (Design) is aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. Policy D1 requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality, which improves the function, appearance and character of the area.

3.2 CPG Digital Infrastructure states that “the Council will aim to keep the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network. Existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used unless the need for a new site has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and appropriately camouflaged where possible.”

3.3 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.

3.4 The applicant's supplementary information document states that the proposal will replace another site in Islington that is to be decommissioned at 1 Brandon Road, N7 9AA. This site is 0.2miles away.

This document has also identified 8 other potential sites where the equipment could be located. However, they have only identified 1 existing site to reutilise but this was discounted as they state that the landlord has future plans to redevelop the site. It is considered that the use of existing sites could be further explored and considered and that the CPG and NPPF guidance has still not been fully addressed.

3.5 Officers note that the siting of telecoms equipment on the roofs of residential tower blocks is common, due to their height and the limited visibility such equipment would have if positioned correctly. However the proposed works in this instance are not considered acceptable. The application site is a relatively low residential block of 5 storeys of which the rear faces onto a railway track. The equipment would be clearly visible from neighbouring residential blocks along Maiden Lane, St Pauls Crescent and Broadfield Lane and from short and long range views along Maiden Lane and St Pauls Crescent.

3.6 The block is relatively new, dating from the 1980s, and there are no existing telecoms equipment on the roof of the building. It is considered that the development's bulky and tall equipment which occupies most of the roof's footprint along its edges would be highly visible and constitute clutter on this rooftop. It is considered that, even if the equipment and antennae were to be located into a more discreet position in the middle of the roof, they would still be very prominent and cause unacceptable visual harm to the area. Therefore the number, scale, bulk, height and location of the telecoms equipment on this rooftop cannot be supported.

3.7 The proposed 8 rooftop equipment cabinets are located in the centre of the roof set back from the edges. Although it is noted that the cabinets are set in from the elevation due to the low height of the building, it is considered that some limited views of the cabinets may be possible from the street and they will be visible from the upper floors of neighbouring residential buildings. The equipment cabinets are identical to the previously refused application ref. 2019/4755/P.

3.8 The previously refused application ref. 2019/4755/P had 12 antennas on 3 support poles, which would be installed on the edge of the roof on the western and southern elevations, and it was considered that they would likely to be highly visible from the surrounding area. The current scheme has reduced the number of antennas down to six on 3 support poles. The support poles would be located in a similar location to the refused scheme. Although the reduction in antenna apertures is welcome from the previous scheme, the number, height and location of these poles will still make the equipment very prominent and clearly visible from neighbouring residential blocks along Maiden Lane, St Pauls Crescent and Broadfield Lane and from short and long range views along Maiden Lane and St Pauls Crescent.

3.9 Six antenna apertures would result in visual clutter at roof level. While the number has decreased from the refused scheme, little justification has still been provided why so many antennas are required here. Secondly, the 5.5m height of the poles is considered excessive. It is considered that, even if the antennas were lowered and could still allow an uninterrupted radio reception sightline, they would still be highly visible as the block is higher than all surrounding buildings. Thirdly, their location on the roof edge results in them being very prominent. However, given the building's footprint and that it is one of the tallest buildings in this area, it is unlikely that moving the antennas further into the middle of the roof or reducing their heights would significantly reduce their visibility.

3.10 Visual clutter and the proliferation of insensitively sited, prominent and bulky telecommunications equipment can have a detrimental impact on the long and short views. The excessive height and clutter would detract from the host property.

3.11 Camden policy D1 supports uncluttered roofscapes which do not detract from the surrounding environment. Any intervention at rooflevel for telecoms equipment should harmonise with the underlying design ethos of the host building and streetscape rather than detract from its character and appearance. It is considered that the equipment in terms of its siting, bulk and proliferation has not been carefully considered and no attempt has been made to screen or conceal the equipment. Therefore the visibility of the proposed equipment is exacerbated by the long/ medium distance views of the building.

3.12 It has been noted that no consideration has been made to enhance the host building 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).

3.13 It is accepted that telecommunications equipment by the nature of their functional design and aesthetic may not blend seamlessly with an existing building. However, given the above, 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 host building and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the wider townscape.

3.14 It is considered that the development does not overcome the previous reason for refusal on the site. The application information still does not provide sufficient justification on alternative sites and number of antennas, therefore without this information the Council is not satisfied that all options have been reasonably explored by the applicant.

3.15 The one equipment cabinet at ground floor would be acceptable in terms of its scale and siting.

4.0 Amenity

4.1 Policy A1 seeks to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered.

4.2 The building is taller than those to the north and west, and the same height as those to the east so the proposed plant is unlikely to cause a loss of outlook or daylight to adjoining occupiers.

4.3 The NPPF requires applications for telecommunications development to be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This should include:

- a. the outcome of consultations with organisations with an interest in the proposed development, in particular with the relevant body where a mast is to be installed near a school or college, or within a statutory safeguarding zone surrounding an aerodrome, technical site or military explosives storage area; and
- b. for an addition to an existing mast or base station, a statement that self-certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection; or
- c. for a new mast or base station, evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure and a statement that self-certifies that, when operational, International Commission guidelines will be met.

4.4 The applicant has provided supplementary information outlining that there are 8 schools within 50-500m from the site and consultations were undertaken; the site is not located within 3km of an aerodrome or airfield and as such the Civil Aviation Authority and Secretary of State have not been notified. A declaration of conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines has also been submitted so there should be no harmful impact on public health.

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 The proposal would therefore fail to accord with policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan 2017 and paragraph 113 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. The development would create overly dominant visual clutter on a prominent roofscape, causing harm to the host and neighbouring buildings and local views from the street.

5.2 Therefore the reasons for refusal of then previous scheme still apply here as follows-
The proposal, by reason of the location, scale, height and design, would result in visual rooftop clutter which would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property and wider streetscene, contrary to policy D1 (Design) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.”

5.2 Refuse full planning permission.