

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		04/08/2021	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		01/08/2021	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Obote Hope				2021/2805/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Maple House 149 Tottenham Court Road London W1T 7NF				Please refer to decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal							
The installation of a 10m rooftop stub tower supporting 12 no. antennas installed on new support poles fixed to the new tower headframe, 3 no. 0.6m dishes; retention of 1 no. 0.3m dish, 4 no. cabinets and 2 no. cabinets on a steel platform, the removal of redundant equipment and steelwork with associated works							
Recommendation:		Refuse planning permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00	
			No. electronic	00			
Summary of consultation responses:		Site notices were displayed on Tottenham Court Road and at the junction with Huntley Street and Grafton Way on 08/07/2021 (expiring 01/08/2021). No objections were received from neighbouring residents.					
CAAC comments:		The Bloomsbury CAAC submitted the following objection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed 10m tower would be highly visible when looking South down Tottenham Court Road from its junction with Warren Street. The tower is an unsympathetic accretion to the host building and would have a detrimental impact on the Bloomsbury CA, we therefore urge that the proposal is refused. 					

Site Description

Maple House is bounded to the north by Beaumont Place, to the west by Tottenham Court Road and to the south by Grafton Way. Beaumont Place leads to the rear entrance of University College Hospital. The site is close to the busy junction between Tottenham Court Road and Euston Road.

The building features a protruding ground, first and second floor with six set back storeys above. The ground floor is in retail use with offices on upper floors.

The site is not located in a conservation area, nor is it listed, but it abuts the northern boundary of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the eastern boundary of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area.

Relevant History

Application site

2011/3630/P - Replacement of x 3 2G O2 antennas and x 3 3G antennas with x 3 O2/Vodafone dualband antennas and x 3 3G O2/Vodafone triband antennas, including installation of x 4 radio equipment cabinets and ancillary equipment at roof level. **Granted** 16/09/2011

2006/3459/P - Installation of 6 antennae, 4 microwave transmission dishes and 6 equipment cabinets on the roof of the building in office (class B1) use. **Granted** 22/09/2006

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

London Plan (2021)

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 (2021)
- CPG Amenity (2021)
- CPG Digital infrastructure (2018)

Assessment

1. Proposal

- 1.1 The proposal involves the installation of a 10m rooftop stub tower supporting 12 no. antennas installed on new support poles fixed to the new tower headframe, 3 no. 0.6m dishes with associated works.
- 1.2 The existing roof level of the building is approximately 31m above ground level. The top of the highest proposed mounting pole, at approx. 10m high, would result in an overall maximum height above ground level of approximately 41m.
- 1.3 There are 1 x 0.3m dish, 4 x cabinets and 2 x cabinets on a steel platform telecoms equipment at roof level which would be retained as part of the proposal.

2. Assessment

- 2.1 The main considerations in relation to this proposal are:
 - Design
 - Amenity

3. 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 although the host building is in a reasonably sensitive location it already accommodates a significant amount of telecommunications infrastructure at roof level. However, the LPA maintains that the existing telecommunication is not significant and the existing plant is not prominent in long views north and south on Tottenham Court Road or from Grafton Way. Whilst the property is located in a very busy part of Central London, on a major transport route and close to major transport hubs, this alone is not justification for the installation of such prominent telecommunication equipment and no alternative site has been explored.
- 3.5 The existing telecommunication equipment is not visually prominent, comprising equipment measuring approximately 2-3m in height. This is a prominent roofscape and the proposed addition of a 10m high substation, much larger and bulkier than the existing equipment would add visible clutter clearly visible from the neighbouring streets. This includes views from the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area to the west, and some views from the Bloomsbury Conservation Area to the south. The visual clutter and the proliferation of insensitively sited,

prominent and bulky telecommunications equipment would have a detrimental impact on these long and short views, detracting from the appearance of the host property and the wider streetscape.

3.6 Camden policy D1 supports uncluttered roofscapes which do not detract from the surrounding environment. Any intervention at roof level 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.

3.7 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 (2021).

3.8 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.

3.9 Little justification has still been provided as to why an alternative site was not explored, nor whether alternative locations on the host building would reduce the visibility of the equipment. However, given the size of the proposed towers, officers question whether an alternative rooftop location would sufficiently reduce visibility of the development so as to overcome concerns regarding the visual harm caused.

3.10 Without sufficient justification on alternative sites and number of antennas, the Council is not satisfied that all options have been reasonably explored by the applicant, and therefore, the harm caused to the character and appearance of the host building would be contrary to policy D1 and would form a reason for refusal.

4. 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 Due to the location and nature of the proposals, the equipment is not considered to cause harm to neighbouring amenity by way of loss of daylight/sunlight or privacy. Although visible from neighbouring windows, it is not considered to cause such harm to neighbouring outlook as to form a reason for refusal on this basis.

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 is 1 school within 180m 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. Recommendation

5.1 The proposal would fail to accord with policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan 2017 and paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. The development would create overly dominant visual clutter on a prominent roofscape, causing harm to the host building and local views from the street.

5.2 Therefore it is recommended that the application is refused for the following reason:

The proposed equipment, by reason of its location, scale, height and design, would create dominant visual clutter on a prominent roofscape, causing harm to the character and appearance of the host building and wider streetscape contrary to policy D1 (Design) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.