

Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2023/2232
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Address:	Pavement outside Tesco Superstore, 230 High Road, Tottenham, London, N15 4AJ
Proposal:	Installation of a free-standing communication hub with LCD advertisement display and defibrillator unit.
Case Officer:	Neil McClellan
Valid Date:	16/08/2023
Applicant:	3
Agent:	Mr Nathan STILL Mr Martin Stephens

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposed Development

This is an application for the installation of a free-standing communication hub with LCD advertisement display and defibrillator unit on the pedestrian footway of the public highway.

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to an area of pavement outside a large Tesco superstore located on the eastern side of the High Road, South Tottenham. The sign would be located close to the store's main entrance.

There are a number of lampposts, bicycle stands, street signs, a telecom equipment cabinet and free-standing CCTV camera mount located along this stretch of pavement. In addition, Tesco have been placing up to three freestanding moveable signs on the pavement outside the main entrance to the shop.

The footway is approximately 7 metres wide along this stretch of the High Road.

The superstore has a car park above it, and residential above that (Blenheim Rise – accessed from Talbot Road to the rear). The store is part of the West Green Road/Seven Sisters district centre and is designated as primary frontage.

The Tesco building, and the stretch of pavement in front of it falls outside the Tottenham High Road Conservation Area which surrounds it. Nearby, the former bank (220-222 High Road) on the

corner of the High Road and Broad Lane is a Grade II Listed Building. There are number of locally listed buildings opposite the site on the other side of the High Road.

The High Road forms part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN).

Relevant Planning and Enforcement History

HGY/2023/02322 – Corresponding application for advertisement consent linked to the communications hub application. Decision pending.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The following responses were received following consultation on the application:

LBH Transport: Object to the application for the following reason(s):

- The proposed installation of the communication hub will increase clutter on-street that will adversely impact on pedestrian amenity, adjacent to a major retailer where the footway is used by significant numbers of pedestrians.
- The location of the proposed communication hub alongside a busy highway comprising of six traffic lanes (3 lanes in each direction) gives rise to concern regarding highway users being distracted (by advertisement displays), and potential for adverse impacts for highway user safety.

Transport for London: Object to the application for the following reason(s):

- The site of the proposed development is on High Road, which forms part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). TfL is the highway authority for the TLRN and is therefore concerned about any proposal which may affect the performance and/or safety of the TLRN.
- The proposed location is immediately outside the Tesco store entrance where a high level of pedestrian movement and activity can be expected. The narrowing of the pavement at such a location would not be supported.
- The covering letter refers to a safety assessment, although no details of this have been provided. Whilst acknowledging that the proposed location is away from a junction, we note the presence of several accidents in the vicinity. Without sight of this analysis TfL cannot support the proposals.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

One representation has been received from neighbours, local groups, etc in response to notification of the application, objecting to the proposal for the following reason(s):

Previous applications for units of this nature have been rejected due to their impact on street clutter and pedestrian movement. This new application adds new elements to the unit, such as a defibrillator, a WiFi hotspot and pollution monitoring facilities, but these new elements do not ameliorate what is essentially an intrusion into and cluttering of the public realm.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Design and appearance;
2. Transport and highways; and
3. Other considerations.

Design and appearance

Local Plan Policy SP11 outlines that all development should enhance and enrich Haringey's built environment. Proposals should respect local context, character and historic significance, in order to contribute to the creation and enhancement of Haringey's sense of place.

Policy DM1 of the Development Management DPD requires developments to be of the highest standard of design, which contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area. Policy DM3 requires new adverts to be high quality and sensitive to the visual appearance of the surrounding street scene. This policy also notes that unsightly proliferation or clutter of signage in a vicinity should be avoided.

London Plan Policy D8 sets out that the public realm should be well-designed, attractive and well-related to local/historic context. Policy D8 specifically seeks to reduce and remove street clutter, including street furniture that is poorly located, unsightly, or without a clear function. Applications which seek to introduce unnecessary street furniture should be refused.

The proposed communication hub unit would have dimensions of 2630mm (height), 1338mm (width) and 917mm (depth including canopy). One side of the unit would have a 1895mm by 1065mm digital screen for the display of advertisements. The other side of the unit would comprise a canopy, 698mm by 392mm digital touch screen, telephone handset, USB charger and defibrillator.

The bulk and scale of the proposed communication hub would have a dominating presence within the public realm. The proposal would exacerbate visual clutter within the street scene by adding street furniture in an unsuitable location that is already populated by an array of advertisement and street furniture structures. A number of prominent digital advertising panels are existing on the High Road footway, within the visual catchment of the proposed development. This includes:

The proposed communication hub would add to existing street clutter, and the cumulative impact of this additional clutter would have an unacceptably harmful impact on the character and appearance of the street scene and local visual amenity, contrary to the above policies which seek to reduce rather than increase visual clutter within the public realm.

Transport & Highways

London Plan Policy T4 notes that proposals should not increase road danger. DPD Policy DM3 outlines that all new advertisements should contribute towards a safe environment and should not cause a hazard to pedestrians or road users. In addition, DPD Policy DM2 requires the protection of safe and accessible pedestrian and cycling routes.

Both Haringey's Transportation Group and Transport for London (TfL) have raised concerns that the proposal would have an adverse impact upon highway safety. The location of the proposed communication hub alongside a busy highway comprising of six traffic lanes (3 lanes in each direction) gives rise to concern regarding highway users being distracted (by advertisement displays), and potential for adverse impacts for highway user safety.

TfL acknowledge that the proposed location is away from a junction but however note the presence of several accidents in the vicinity. In the absence of an appropriate safety analysis, they cannot support the proposals.

Both Haringey's Transportation Group and TfL note the high level of pedestrian movement and activity that can be expected outside a major retailer and object to the narrowing of the pavement at this location.

In addition, although some distance from the Tottenham Hotspur Football Stadium, the walk from Seven Sisters Station to the stadium is major route for visitors on event days and pavements on both sides of the High Road can become congested.

The advertising structure would be visual distraction for road users, including vehicle drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, increasing the risk of accidents.

The pavement, due to the presence of the superstore, and its forming part of one the main routes to a large multi-event stadium, experiences high levels of pedestrian traffic, necessitating footway clearances in excess of minimum requirements in order to ensure pedestrian safety and amenity.

Other considerations

It is noted that the communication hub would allow the display of community messaging, emergency adverts and directional information. Furthermore, the structure would incorporate features such as: wi-fi, phone charging, a free phone calling system and defibrillators. However, it is considered that the benefits of the street hub would only be of moderate weight. This moderate weight would not outweigh the harm to the appearance of the public realm nor the impact upon highway safety.

CONCLUSION

The proposal is considered unacceptable, as the proposed communication hub would appear as a bulky, dominant and visually intrusive feature in the public realm. There would be an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the public realm, the street scene and the wider locality.

The proposed development would have an adverse impact upon highway safety. The advertising structure would be visual distraction for road users and hinder the safety and ease of movement of pedestrians along the footway.

All other relevant policies and considerations, including equalities, have been taken into account. Planning permission should be refused for the reasons set out above. The details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse permission for the following reasons:

Refusal Reasons:

The proposed development, by virtue of its size, scale and siting, would appear as a visually intrusive addition to the streetscene, resulting in the unsightly proliferation of visual clutter within the public realm, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the street scene and local visual amenity, contrary to Policies D3 and D8 of the London Plan (2021), Policy SP11 of Haringey's Local Plan Strategic Policies (2017) and Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Development Management DPD (2017).

The proposed development would have an adverse impact upon highway safety, by causing a visual distraction and obstructing sightlines for road users, increasing the risk of traffic accidents. The proposal would also impact negatively on the ease and safety of pedestrian movement in this busy town centre location. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies D3 and D8 of the London Plan (2021), Policies DM2 and DM3 of the Development Management DPD (2017).