



Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2024/2865
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Address:	Telephone Exchange, Grand Avenue, Hornsey, London, N10 3AY
Proposal:	Remove glass panes from a window on the first floor west elevation. An aluminium louvre will be installed and fixed to the wooden window frames. All finishes to match existing adjacent louvres already installed in the building.
Case Officer:	Josh Parker
Valid Date:	17/10/2024
Applicant:	British Telecom
Agent:	Mr Tim Woodall

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposed Development

This is an application to remove glass panes from a window on the first floor west elevation. An aluminium louvre will be installed and fixed to the wooden window frames. All finishes to match existing adjacent louvres already installed in the building.

Site and Surroundings

Telephone Exchange located on the southern side of Grand Avenue. The host building is 10.4 metres to the main roof height with the top of the plantroom being 13.75 metres. The building is already host to telecoms equipment which is located around the flat roof and plantroom in the centre of the roof. The surrounding area mainly residential in character.

The site falls within Muswell Hill Conservation Area.

Relevant Planning and Enforcement History

The most recent planning history in relation to the site is as follows.

- HGY/2023/1985 - Installation of new and alteration of existing telecommunications apparatus on roof of building - approved 15/9/2023.

- HGY/2022/3221 - Addition of 3no. antennas on new climbable tripods and installation of ancillary apparatus – approved 13/12/2022.
- HGY/2021/0893 - Removal of 3 no. antennas and installation of 3 no. antennas and supporting steelwork and associated apparatus and ancillary works – approved 07/05/2021.
- HGY/2019/1493 - Prior notification: Development by telecoms operators for: installation 1No. CSC Cabinet to be placed on an existing concrete plinth. In addition, the installation of 12No. ERS units will be mounted on proposed free standing frames, 3 No. antennas to be installed on existing steel work at a height of 14.9m & 13.7m to replace 3No. antennas be removed from a height of 14.9m & 13.7m. Additional ancillary works including cabling and cable trays. – approved 24/06/2019.
- HGY/2016/2519 - Prior notification for the installation of replacement antennas, the removal of one equipment cabinet, the installation of two equipment cabinets and ancillary development – approved 15/09/2016.

2. CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The responses below were received following consultation on the application:

Internal:

LBH Conservation: Whilst the loss of the appreciation of the original window is harmful to its composition and detailing and would erode gradually some of its character with a poor quality louvre. Whilst this impact is limited by its location on the side elevation, there are several other windows where this has already occurred This is reaching the limit of these types of changes, deadening the elevations and generally eroding its character as an attractive utility building. Whilst this proposal is not considered to cause harm to the conservation area, further changes of this ilk would be likely to cause harm due to their cumulative impact.

3. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised by way of 1 site notice displayed in the vicinity of the site and letters.

No representations have been received from neighbours, local groups, in response to notification and publicity of the application.

4. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Design and appearance.
2. Impact on Muswell Hill CA.
3. Impact on neighbouring amenity.

Design and appearance

In relation to Telecommunications Equipment Policy DM3(d) sets out that proposals for the installation of telecommunications equipment will be permitted where:

- a. It is demonstrated the equipment is limited to the minimum operational equipment, which should include any future-proofing requirements to accommodate anticipated improvements in infrastructure.
- b. Opportunities for sharing facilities, such as masts, cabinet boxes and satellite dishes, and erecting antennae on existing buildings or other structures has been fully explored and taken advantage of.
- c. There is no significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of neighbouring occupiers.
- d. There is no adverse effect on the external appearance of the building, street scene, or spaces in which they are located.
- e. The size of any equipment visible from the street is minimised (including satellite dishes, other domestic equipment and any supporting structures).
- f. They are located discretely and do not detract from the special character and appearance of heritage assets or conservation area (see Policy DM9).
- g. They are appropriately designed, coloured and landscaped. For dishes, this may include installing a mesh or transparent structure.
- h. A minimum residual footway width on main pedestrian roads is preserved, in line with the Manual for Streets.”

Policy SI 6 Digital connectivity infrastructure point 4 states: “support the effective use of rooftops and the public realm (such as street furniture and bins) to accommodate well-designed and suitably located mobile digital infrastructure”.

NPPF 2019 (Supporting high quality communications)

Para 112 states: “Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution)”.

Para 113 also states: “The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing 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”.

BT needs to upgrade the broadband and landline technology for the local area that this telephone exchange serves. As part of this upgrade, additional ventilation is required at the above premises. It is proposed to remove panes of glass from a window on the first floor west elevation. An aluminium louvre will be installed and fixed to the wooden window frames. This louvre would be sited to the southwestern flank toward the rear of the site in between the existing louvres documented above in the site history. Given their position at height above street level, and siting to

the rear of the site well away from street view it is considered that their visual impact and presence are likely to go unnoticed when seen at distance and in perspective.

The equipment would be placed on a section of the building that is not visible from the Grand Parade or Muswell Hill street scene.

In view of the appearance of the existing structures, considered alongside the need to deliver 5G technology (as highlighted by the NPPF), officers are satisfied on balance, that the harm caused as a consequence of the replacement/additional masts would not be sufficient to sustain a sound reason for refusal.

Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area

London Plan Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that development proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, should conserve their significance. This policy applies to designated and non-designated heritage assets. Local Plan Policy SP12 and DPD Policy DM9 set out the Council's approach to the management, conservation and enhancement of the Borough's historic environment.

DPD Policy DM9 states that proposals affecting a designated or non-designated heritage asset will be assessed against the significance of the asset and its setting, and the impact of the proposals on that significance; setting out a range of issues which will be taken into account. In relation to extensions or alterations to residential buildings, including roof extensions, Policy DM9 requires proposals to be of a high, site specific, and sensitive design quality, which respect and/ or complement the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, detailing of the original buildings, including external features such as chimneys, and porches. The policy also requires the use of high-quality matching or complementary materials, in order to be sensitive to context.

In terms of design considerations, the louvre is not considered to be of notable aesthetic value, and therefore the proposed installation would not physically impact a building of particular architectural quality. While the additions are restricted to the external of the existing building, the lightweight construction of these new features would ensure that they would not appear excessively bulky. The siting of the louvre to the south-western side of the building means that the additions would not be highly visible from Grand Avenue. Equally the in-house conservation officer has sighted the plans and has no objection. The proposal would be of acceptable design, with the character and appearance of the host building, the surrounding area and the CA not harmed. The special interest and historic significance of the CA would be preserved.

Similarly, the proposal is not considered to have any significant impact upon the setting of the conservation area. The building is considered to make a neutral contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

London Plan Policy D6 outlines that design must not be detrimental to the amenity of surrounding housing, in specific stating that proposals should provide sufficient daylight and sunlight to surrounding housing that is appropriate for its context, while also minimising overshadowing. London Plan Policy D14 requires development proposals to reduce, manage and mitigate noise impacts.

In terms of visual amenity, the proposal would have a limited additional impact when viewed in the context of the existing building and installation and would have an acceptable impact to the visual amenities of nearby occupiers.

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Conclusion

The proposal is considered acceptable and represent a relatively modest upgrade to existing telecommunications equipment at the site and would have an acceptable impact on the host building, the conservation area, the amenities of the neighbouring occupiers.

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

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION subject to conditions

Conditions:

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than three years from the date of this decision notice, failing which the permission shall be of no effect.

Reason: This condition is imposed by virtue of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed in this decision notice, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives:

INFORMATIVE: Hours of Construction Work

The applicant is advised that under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, construction work which will be audible at the site boundary will be restricted to the following hours:-

8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday

8.00am - 1.00pm Saturday

and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

INFORMATIVE: Land Ownership

The applicant is advised that this planning permission does not convey the right to enter onto or build on land not within his ownership.