

## Planning

## Growth & Development

### Delegated officer report for planning application

**Application no.** 131987/FO/2021

**Date registered valid:** 4 November 2021

**Proposal:** Removal and replacement of 6no. antennas, installation of 6no. new antennas behind 3no. new replica GRP louvres and 2no. GPS nodes on the western elevation and associated ancillary development

**Address:** St Cross With St Paul Church, 611 Ashton New Road, Manchester, M11 4RX

**Ward(s):** Clayton & Openshaw Ward

**Applicant:** Cornerstone Craven Court, Stanhope Road, Surrey, GU15 3BS

**Agent (if any):** Ms Rebecca Skerrett Avison Young Norfolk House, 7 Norfolk Street, Manchester, M2 1DW

**Case officer:** Sue Wills  
Tel: 0161 234 4524  
Email: sue.wills@manchester.gov.uk

**Recommendation:** Approve

**Date of recommendation:** 15 December 2021

## **Application details**

**Type of application:** Full Application Consent

**Development type:** Minor Other

**Date of site visit:**

**Standard consultations:**

Printed: 4 November 2021 Expired: 25 November 2021

**Neighbour notifications**

Printed: 4 November 2021 Expired: 25 November 2021

**Site notice**

Posted: 5 November 2021 Expired: 26 November 2021

**Press advert**

Published: 9 November 2021 Expired: 30 November 2021

**Departure from Development Plan:** No

**Environmental Statement:** Not required

## **Description of site/building**

St Cross with St Paul Church has a Grade II\* listing and positively contributes to the wider environment being clearly visible in the streetscene on Ashton New Road. The church has currently has 6 no. antennas, and 2 Huawei BTS indoor cabinets located behind louvres within the bell tower.

**Listed building:** Grade II \*

**Conservation area:** Not applicable

**Tree Preservation Order:** Not applicable

## **Planning History**

125728/FO/2019 -Installation of 1No. GPS antenna mounted externally at a height of 6.25 metres above ground level on the south western elevation together with associated equipment. St Cross With St Paul Church, 611 Ashton New Road. Approved subject to conditions 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

This scheme has not been implemented.

## **Description of area**

St Cross With St Paul Church is located in vicinity of the junction of Clayton Street and Ashton New Road, and lies to the east of Clayton Hall a grade II \* listed building with moat.

## **Description of development**

The proposal relates to the removal and replacement of 6no antennas, installation of 6 no. new antennas behind 3 no. new replica GRP louvres and 2no GPS nodes on the western elevation.

The proposal relates to the installation of 2 No. GPS antenna mounted externally at a height of 6.25 metres above ground level on the western elevation of the church tower together with associated wiring. The GPS modules would be coloured to match the existing brickwork. The proposed GPS cable would follow the route of existing cables through the window and into the adjoining spiral staircase.

The proposed equipment would be affixed to the existing metal work supporting the existing telecommunications equipment where possible. The louvres in the centre of the openings on the North, East and West of the tower are proposed to be replaced with GRP as per the existing louvres which have been installed previously to either side of the central column of louvres on the North, East and West tower elevations.

With regard to the external works – the GPS node which was previously approved has not been installed, therefore there will be 2 in total (one for each operator).

### **Consultations & Notification Responses**

The application has been advertised as affecting a listed building on site on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and in the press on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

Local residents and local businesses - No comments received.

Historic England - On the basis of the information available to date, they do not wish to offer any comments, and suggest the views of the Council's specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, are sought, as relevant.

Highways Services - The proposed equipment is an upgrade of the current telecommunications base station at this location, most of the existing equipment will be removed once the updated equipment is installed and running efficiently to ensure continuation of service.

All the telecommunication equipment will be placed on private land at St Cross with St Paul Church 611 Ashton New Road.

Highways do not object to this proposal

Environmental Health - have sought confirmation that there would no noise-making equipment involved. They have suggested that this doesn't appear to be the case from the submitted information, and there do not appear to be any noise-sensitive uses nearby, therefore it's unlikely that they would have any objection to the development.

### **Issues**

#### **Policy Context**

The following local and national policies and documents are considered relevant in the determination of the application proposals.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

National Planning Policy Framework came into effect on 27th March 2012 and was amended and updated in February 2019, and subsequently in July 2021. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It defines the Government's requirements for the planning system 'only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so'. It provides a mechanism through which local people and

their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities'.

The following specific policies are considered to be particularly relevant to the proposed development:

#### Chapter 10 - supporting High quality communications

Paragraph 114 - "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)"

This proposal is for the upgrade of an existing site. The GPS antenna is required for TDD (time division duplex) technologies, specifically in relation to providing 4G coverage. The site is in compliance with National policy and ensures the continued provision of high quality digital infrastructure in this busy locality.

Paragraph 115 "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....., use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged."

The proposal utilises an existing building and upgrades an existing site.

#### Chapter 12: Achieving well -designed places

The resultant design of the development has been assessed in relation to the impact to the visual appearance of the heritage asset, and is considered to be acceptable for the reasons outlined below.

#### Chapter 16- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Paragraph 194 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 195 - States that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 197- States that, in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a. The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b. The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality and
- c. The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to

local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 199 - States that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Paragraph 200 - States that any harm to , or loss of , the significance of a designated heritage asset ( from its alteration or destruction , or from development within its setting ) , should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 202 states that where a development proposal would 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.

In this case the proposal relates to internal works within the church bell tower relating to the removal and replacement of 6no antennas, installation of 6 no. new antennas behind 3 no. new replica GRP louvres, and the installation of 2 no. GPS nodes on the external façade of the western elevation, with limited impacts to the historic fabric as the proposed GPS cable would follow the route of existing cables through the window and into the adjoining spiral staircase, and the proposed antennae would be affixed to the existing metal framework within the church tower . These works are considered to be to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. The proposal would enable improvements for the users of equipment reliant on GPS, which it is considered would outweigh the visual impact of 2no. small GPS nodes coloured to match the existing church brickwork.

#### National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

The relevant sections of the NPPG relate to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (ID:18). The NPPG states that heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals. The NPPG states that it is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting and even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm. It therefore advises that a thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset under consideration and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

These largely relate to detailed aspects of a planning submission, which are addressed in the following section of the report; the conclusions of the necessary assessments is that the proposal accords with the general principles of the NPPG.

Manchester's Local Development Framework: Core Strategy - The Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 -2027 ('the Core Strategy') was adopted by the City Council on 11th July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as the document that sets out the long term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development. A number of UDP policies have been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy. Planning applications in Manchester must be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents.'

The main policies that relate to the proposal are Policies SP1 (Spatial Principles), EN3 (Heritage), DM1 (Development Management), and CC9 (Design and Heritage) of the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester and saved policies DC17.1 (Telecommunications) DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the "Listed Building Act") provides that "in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to a listed building, the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses"

Section 66 Listed Building Act requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. This requires more than a simple balancing exercise and considerable importance and weight should be given to the desirability of preserving the setting.

#### Principle

The proposal seeks approval for the removal and replacement of 6no antennas, installation of 6 no. new antennas behind 3 no. new replica GRP louvres and 2no GPS nodes on the western elevation.

The works have been designed to involve a minimal level of intervention to the listed structure and are not considered to adversely impact on the character of the structure or to the setting of listed church, and are considered to be acceptable in principle.

#### Heritage statement

The submitted planning, heritage and design and access statement identifies the extent of works and quantifies the potential impact and on this basis it is, generally considered, the proposed works would not unduly affect the character of the listed structure. The impact of the works is considered to be relatively minimal.

#### Impact of the works on the listed church

Policies EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will encourage development that takes advantage of the City's heritage. New development should preserve or enhance the historic environment and proposal which re-use heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

The NPPF defines 'significance' as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting.

The NPPG goes on to state that what matters in assessing if proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset.

The listing describes the church, as being circa 1863-1866, comprising red brick with multiple bands of sandstone and blue brick, with steeply pitched slate roofs. The tower is tall and narrow, with slender angled buttresses and a steep pyramidal roof of banded slate, and has a gabled south porch with 2-centred arched doorway, very narrow lancets to the next 2 stages and triple lancet louvred belfry windows.

The removal and replacement of 6 no. antennas, and installation of 6 no. new antennas would be within the church tower and not visible from outside the building. Furthermore, the antennae would be affixed to an existing steel frame within the church tower, thereby not giving rise to additional impacts to the fabric of the listed building.

As part of an earlier application which was granted consent, but was not implemented, the planning agent was asked to position the GPS node within the belfry with the existing antennas. The planning agent however, subsequently confirmed that the GPS nodes have to be positioned to have a clear view of the sky to receive satellite information.

The GPS node and bracket would be painted to match the brickwork, to minimise the visual effects of the proposal.

Consideration was given to the repositioning of the GPS nodes to sit as close as possible to where the wiring runs through the church window frame, to reduce the extent of wiring which would be visible on the elevation. It is however, understood that the antenna cannot be moved to the opposite side of the window because the signal would be blocked by the adjacent wall. Furthermore, that the cable cannot come through under the GPS in the current position due to internal issues. As the proposed cable is small measuring 12mm diameter it would not however, be overly visible.

In terms of the proposed replacement of the existing stone louvres, the outer side of each window has previously been replaced with glass reinforced plastic (GRP) to exactly match the existing. The agent has submitted a photograph to show the comparison between the replaced louvres (the two outer windows) and the central window which has the original stone louvres. From the submitted photographs the GRP louvres are not readily distinguishable from the original stone louvres. The central louvres are proposed to be replaced with a GRP product as additional antennas are proposed to be located behind the central louvres, and as the signal can not transmit through stone. The replacement central louvres proposed to the north west and east facades of the bell tower.

The agent has confirmed that the listed building element will be dealt with under ecclesiastical exemption and part of the approval would be that the original louvres would to be logged and stored on site and replaced if / when the telecoms equipment is no longer required. It is recommended that this is conditioned.

It is acknowledged that the proposed works have been designed to involve a minimal level of intervention to the listed structure. It is considered that the uncluttered appearance of the church makes an important contribution to heritage significance and visual amenity, which would be affected by the installation of two GPS nodes to the external western façade of the church tower. However, the proposed colouration of the nodes and associated brackets to match the existing brickwork is considered that this is an appropriate approach for the proposed installation. Due to the small scale of the nodes and their height at 6.25 metres above ground level the nodes will not be particularly noticeable.

The proposed development overall amounts to less than substantial harm to the heritage asset, and the harm is considered, given the justification, to be outweighed by the public benefit of enabling improvements for the users of telecommunications equipment, and equipment reliant on GPS.

## Telecommunications

In terms of this policy the proposal is to upgrade an existing site. Although the GPS nodes are mounted externally, they will not be overly visible given its size and positioning on the building. Additionally from public vantage points due to the screening of the site by tall trees, the installation will not be readily visible. There are no residential properties in proximity to the site.

On this basis it is considered that the works would accord with the requirements of Core Strategy policies SP1, EN1 and DM1, saved UDP policy DC19 and NPPF Chapters 10, 12 and 16.

## Noise

Following observations from Environmental Health officers, confirmation was sought from the planning agent regarding potential noise from the installation of the additional telecommunications equipment. Confirmation has been received from the agent that the installation doesn't make any noise that can be heard externally and any equipment with cooling fans is located within the tower. On this basis and that the nearest residential properties are 114m to the northeast of the site, it is not considered that any increase in noise levels from cooling fans would give rise to any significant impact to residential amenity.

## **Human Rights Act 1998 considerations**

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

## **Recommendation:**

### **Article 35 Declaration**

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. Concerns were expressed about the visual impacts of the proposed GRP louvres and the colouration of the node brackets. Further information has been submitted which addresses the matters raised. The proposal is considered to be acceptable and therefore determined within a timely manner.

**Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse**

1.The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

Plan ref: 100 rev.A ( Site location map); 200 rev.A ( Existing site plan); 201 rev.A ( Site plan); 300 rev.A ( Existing south elevation) ; 301 rev.A ( Proposed south elevation) ;302 rev.A ( Proposed part west elevation); 400 rev.A ( Existing antenna plan); 401 rev.A (Proposed Antenna plan); 402 rev.A ( Proposed antenna elevation) ; and 606 rev.A (GPS Mounting details);Design , Access and Heritage Statement ; ICNIRP Certificate ;Digital Public Benefit Brochure ; Health summary ;Mobile phones and health research summary; EMF guidelines ;5G services ; received by the City Council as local planning authority on 20th October 2021;

Email from agent with photographic visual of the existing stone and GRP louvre arrangement dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021;

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to policies EN3, SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and saved Unitary Development Plan policy DC19.

3.The GPS nodes and associated brackets shall be coloured to match the existing brickwork upon which they would be sited on the western elevation of St Cross with St Paul Church .

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as local planning authority in the interests of the visual amenity of the area within which the site is located, as specified in policies EN3, SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, and saved UDP policy DC19.

4. The original stone louvres to be removed from North, West and East elevation of the St Cross with St Paul church tower, shall be stored and reinstated in the church tower within 3 months of the telecommunications equipment becoming obsolete.

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as local planning authority in the interests of the visual amenity of the area within which the site is located, as specified in policies EN3, SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, and saved UDP policy DC19.

## **Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified**

Highway Services  
Environmental Health  
Historic England (North West)

St Cross Church, 611 Ashton New Road, Manchester, M11 4RX  
117 North Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4NE  
111 North Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4NE  
SILVER SPOON KITCHENS LTD, Hollinwood Workshop, Clayton Street, Manchester, M11 4HA  
Sure Start Centre, 101 North Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4NE  
119 North Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4NE  
115 North Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4NE  
113 North Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4NE  
109 North Road, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4NE

## **Appendix 2 – Planning constraints**

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4  
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding - Not Affected  
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT\_LOW\_RISK\_AREA  
HSE COMAH Zone - H3777 OZ - Evonik Chemicals Ltd Outer Zone  
Area Team Boundary - Name: NORTH2