GallifordTry

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Airwave Solutions Ltd

MAN527A

Planning application for the installation of a pole-mounted Yagi antenna on the rooftop.

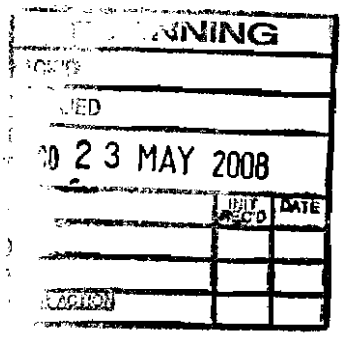
Radisson Edwardian Hotel,

Free Trade Hall,

Peter Street,

Manchester,

M2 5GP.



1. Introduction

1.1 Commissioned by the Home Office in October 1997, the Public Safety Radio Communications Project (Airwave Service) is a fully integrated, digital radio system which has been designed to meet the needs of the emergency services in England, Scotland and Wales. Initially being provided for the Police Force, it is now available for all other emergency services without the need for a new network or additional masts. A survey was undertaken at the Radisson Hotel, which established that there was a need to improve coverage within the building. Although the installation provides a valuable permanent solution, the timing of the submission is to ensure it is operational in time for the Labour Party Conference in September. In association with this proposal, will be improvements to in-building coverage at Manchester Central/MICC and The Midland Hotel. The apparatus required will have minimal visual impact, being similar in appearance to a TV aerial. However, a planning application is required for the external antenna that is to be fixed at roof-top level, because the building is within the St Peter's Square Conservation Area. We are aware that the façade to the Free Trade Hall building forms part of the hotel and is Grade II* listed. To meet coverage requirements, there will be a series of small omni antennas located within the hotel building, mainly hidden from view in existing risers and fixed above suspended ceilings on existing cable trays. Confirmation has been received from the Council, acknowledging that there are no listed building implications and an application for listed building consent will not be required. Details of the location of the antennas have been included on the submitted drawings, for information purposes only.

1.2 A pre-application consultation letter was sent to The Planning Department on 29 April 2008. A meeting was held at the Council Offices, with Lucy Harrison, on 9 May 2008. Given the minor nature of the proposal, the purpose of the meeting was mainly in order to explain the purpose of the scheme and to establish the level of detail required for the application. A subsequent exchange of emails confirmed that the scheme would require an application for planning permission, but not an application for listed building consent (copy appended to this report).

1.3 Airwave Solutions Ltd recognises that some people may have concerns over health and safety issues. However, this scheme would operate at very low radio frequency

output levels, which are significantly less than a typical mobile base station. The installation will be ICNIRP compliant, as required by PPG8. An ICNIRP certificate is appended to this statement.

2. Application site and setting: Context

2.1 The Radisson is a modern luxury hotel, which opened in 2004. Although it is within a Conservation Area and the building incorporates the historic and architecturally important façade of the Free Trade Hall, otherwise the architecture of the building is modern concrete and glass. The precise location of the antenna that is the subject of this application is at the fifteenth floor level and remote from the historic façade.

3. Proposed Development

3.1 The application is for the installation of telecommunications apparatus on the rooftop of the building. The proposal comprises a 4-element yagi antenna, which is to pole mounted to the existing parapet wall. The height of the parapet wall is about 1.8 metres above the adjacent flat roof level. The antenna will be mounted on a slim aluminium pole and at a height of about 1 metre above the top of the parapet. It will be located in proximity to a pole-mounted television and ring antenna. The size and appearance of the proposed antenna will be similar to that of a television aerial. Its projection from the steel supporting pole will be 770 mm. The antenna has been sited where it can be directed to receive the required radio signals from the adjacent existing site. The associated equipment cabinets (Integrated Cell Enhancer Units and Battery Back up units) will be located nearby, within the plant room.

3.2 Details of the antenna that is the subject of this application is shown on the submitted drawings MAN527A-GA-01A, 02A, 12A, 13A and 14A. In addition, details of the associated antennas to be located within the building are shown on drawing Nos. MAN527A-GA-03A to 11A.

4. Planning Policy

4.1 The relevant Local Plan policies are the saved policies set out in adopted Manchester City Unitary Development Plan (1995). Relevant is Policy DC17.1 Telecommunications. The site is within a conservation area and the façade of the building is listed, therefore policies DC18.1 Conservation Areas and DC 19.1 also require consideration. The relevant national planning guidance is contained within PPG8 and PPG15. Permission is required because the site is within a Conservation Area, otherwise the proposal would be permitted development.

4.2 ***Planning Guidance Policy Guidance Note 8 – Telecommunications***
Specific guidance on the development of telecommunications installations is found in PPG8. Many aspects of this guidance are relevant to this proposal. In particular PPG8 is supportive of modern telecommunications and acknowledges that they are an essential and beneficial element in the life of the local community and the national economy. In this case, the installation will provided improved security.

4.3 ***Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment***
Guidance within PPG 15 makes it clear that development in Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation area and where and applications for planning permission or listed building consent should have regard to the setting of any listed buildings.

4.4 In considering the design and siting of the proposal, full regard has been given to the Council's policies within the Unitary Development Plan.

4.5 ***Policy DC 18.1 Conservation Areas***
The relevant part of the policy is DC 18.1 a). The policy states:

The Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.

a. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:
i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;

ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;

iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);

iv) the effect of signs and advertisements;

v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.

4.6 ***Policy DC 19. Listed Buildings***

It has been confirmed that the installation does not require listed building consent. However, Policy DC 19.1 d. refers to development in the vicinity of a listed building. The policy states:

In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:

d. seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features;

4.7 ***Policy DC17.1 Telecommunications:***

The policy states:

Applications for telecommunications developments will normally be approved if the Council can be satisfied that the development has been sited and designed to minimise its impact on residential amenity and in environmentally sensitive areas. Wherever possible, the Council will expect the potential of existing buildings and masts, including the sharing of such facilities, to be fully explored before agreeing to additional separate development.

5. Key Planning Issues: Design and Access

5.1 Turning to the application of these policies, we consider that the key issue is whether the proposal would be an acceptable form of development that would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the building, the setting of the listed façade of the former Free Trade Hall, its siting within a Conservation Area and the residential amenity of the nearest dwellings. This statement concludes that the proposed development would be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building and its setting and that it would not have any impact on residential amenity.

5.2 ***Regard to PPG8 and DC17.1 Telecommunications***

The proposal is in accordance with Government Advice in paragraph 21 of PPG8, which states that in addition to exploring the sharing of masts and sites (paragraphs 19 and 20)...;

21. Use should also be made of existing buildings and other structures, such as electricity pylons, to site new antennas. Local planning authorities may reasonably expect applicants for new masts to show evidence that they have explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure.

5.3 In this instance, the circumstances are somewhat different to the usual consideration of a mobile phone base station. There is a specific requirement to provide in-building coverage to the building, which can only be achieved through the rooftop mounted antenna, linked by cables to a series of small antennas within the building. It is for this reason that a list of alternative sites has not been provided and why technical justification through the submission of coverage plots is not relevant. There is an identified need for the installation, which can be met through the siting of an antenna having a visual impact not significantly greater than a television aerial. However, the proposal satisfies the encouragement within PPG8 to utilise existing buildings.

5.4 Again, the minimal impact means the character of the sensitive Conservation Area location will be preserved and there will be no limited impact upon residential amenity. The proposal utilises an existing building. The specific requirement to

provide in-building coverage to The Radisson Hotel means that sharing an existing telecommunications site is not an option.

5.5 ***Impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and nearest listed buildings***

The external antenna will have minimal impact given its appearance and elevated siting. The antenna will be mounted where it cannot be viewed in conjunction with the historic Free Trade Hall façade. Because the scale of the installation is akin to a TV aerial and is located at 15th floor level in a location where there are existing aerials that are not readily visible from ground level, it is considered that character of the Conservation area will be preserved as the proposal will not adversely impact upon the setting of a listed building.

5.6 ***Impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings:***

Again, the design similar in scale to a TV aerial, together with the separation from any buildings means that visual impact will be negligible. Having regards to health issues the interests of health issues, as stated in paragraph 1.3, the installation will be ICNIRP compliant, as required by PPG8 and would operate at very low power levels.

5.7 ***Access Statement:***

Access for occasional maintenance will be required. This will involve pedestrian access be by lift to the plant room, which gives level access to the rooftop.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, we consider that the siting of a yagi antenna on a slim pole in the location proposed on the building will respect the character of the conservation area and not affect the setting of any listed buildings.

The installation should be viewed in the context that it will have a similar appearance to a terrestrial television aerial. The external antenna will have minimal impact given its appearance and elevated siting.

As explained, given the particular circumstances and requirement to provide in-building coverage to The Radisson Hotel only, the consideration of alternative sites is not relevant here.

For the reasons given above, we consider that the proposal complies with relevant Government Guidance and Local Plan policies. We therefore ask that permission is granted.

Paul Street BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI
Senior Town Planner
Galliford Try Communications
For and on behalf of Airwave Solutions Ltd

Appendix: List of Documents

1. Application Form
2. Planning Design and Access Statement
3. Drawing Nos. MAN527A-GA-01A to 14A
4. ICNIRP Certificate
5. Copy of email response from the LPA confirming listed building consent is not required.
6. Technical information sheet for the 4-element yagi antenna
7. Details of omni antenna (for information only)
8. Details of antenna feeder cable (for information only)