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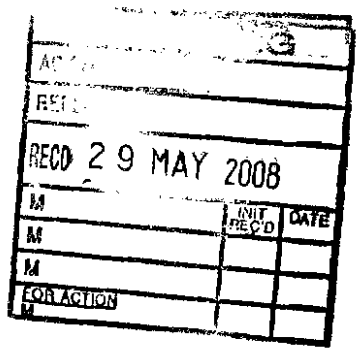

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Airwave Solutions Ltd

MAN532A

Planning application for the installation of a pole-mounted 4 - element Yagi antenna on the rooftop and Listed Building Consent application for the external Yagi antenna, 42 no. internally mounted Omni antennas and associated cabling, cell enhancer units and ancillary development.

Midland Hotel,

Peter Street,

Manchester,

M60 2DS

1. Introduction

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of both the planning application and listed building consent application for the installation of telecommunications apparatus at The Midland Hotel on behalf of Airwave Solutions Limited. The installation comprises a 4-element yagi antenna on the building and associated apparatus, which comprises an internally located cell enhancer unit, a series of 42 omni antennas mounted within the building and associated cabling. The building is Grade II* listed and is within St. Peter's Square Conservation Area. This statement also includes a design and access section, as required by Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and as set out in Circular 01/2006. As you are aware, the 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 provided for the Police Forces, the system is available for use by all the emergency services without the need for a new network or additional masts.

1.2 The purpose of the apparatus proposed here is to improve the Airwave network within the Midland Hotel Building. Although intended as a permanent solution, there is a specific requirement to ensure the improvement of coverage is available for the Labour Party Conference in September.

1.3 In building coverage improvements are also sought for The Radisson Hotel and the Manchester Central/MICC site. Formal applications and notifications are being submitted for the necessary planning permissions and consents.

1.4 The external 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 which is to be fixed at roof-top level, because the building is within the St Peter's Square Conservation Area. 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 mainly suspended ceilings on existing cable trays. Photographs on drawing no. 14A and photographs appended to

this statement explain the locations of the internal antennas and cable trays. In addition, there will be radiating cable mounted at upper basement level (i.e: below pavement level) that will surround the building and will utilise existing cable runs (see drawing 14A). These small antennas, together with both the external yagi antenna and the associated works, require listed building consent.

1.5 A pre-application consultation letter was sent to The Planning Department on 24 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 for the yagi antenna only, with an application for listed building consent required for the whole scheme. One suggestion was that the antenna would be better mounted on the steelwork that is fixed to the lift motor room and plant room area, as opposed to directly on to the lift motor room itself. The proposal has been amended accordingly. She advised that further information on the fixing of omni antennas and associated cable routes, would be required. Details have been shown on the submitted drawings and are explained later in this report.

1.6 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 Midland Hotel is a Grade II* listed building that was built between 1898 and 1903. It is also within St Peter's Square Conservation Area. Although the exterior of the building appears unaltered, there have been alterations within the building

relating to its function as a modern hotel, such as the provision of risers and unobtrusive cable routes. Relevant to both the application for full planning permission and listed building consent is the fact that the external antenna that is the subject of this application is mounted to the lift motor room, which is a later addition to the building.

3. Proposed Development

3.1 *Planning Permission*

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 be fixed to a slim pole and clamped to the steelwork that adjoins the exterior of the lift motor room. It will be located in proximity to an existing pole-mounted ring antenna. The size and appearance of the proposed antenna will be similar to that of a television aerial. The antenna has been sited where it can be directed to receive the required radio signals from the adjacent existing site. All other associated development is the subject of the application for Listed Building Consent.

3.2 Details of the antenna that is the subject of the planning application is shown on the submitted drawings MAN532A-GA-01A, 02B and 13A and 14A.

3.3 *Listed Building Consent*

In addition to the yagi antenna, listed building consent is required for the associated works, including internal and external cabling, the radio equipment cabinets (Integrated Cell Enhancer Units and Battery Back Up Units) and the 42 omni antennas. The relevant drawings are MAN532A-GA-01A, 02B, 03A to 14A.

Integrated Cell Enhancer Units – these are a pale grey painted aluminium boxes. The cell enhancer units measure 420mm wide x 620mm high x 250mm deep. The Battery Back Up Units are pale grey painted steel boxes that measure 620mm high x 420mm wide x 250mm deep. They will be mounted to the concrete block work wall within the plant room.

Omni antennas – these are circular dome shaped antennas, which measure 200mm in diameter x 700mm in depth. They are coloured white.

Cables – both the feeder cables and radiating cables are 11mm diameter black polyethylene coated cables.

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 building is Grade II* listed, therefore policies DC18.1 Conservation Areas and DC 19.1 Listed Buildings 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 and is a listed building. 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 provide 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, its siting within a Conservation Area and the residential amenity of the nearest dwellings. By explaining the minimal impact (the installation is largely not in public view and utilises existing cable and service routes) this statement concludes that the proposed development would be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building and its setting and that there would not be any residential amenity issues.

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 an installation on the building and comprises the rooftop mounted antenna, linked by cables to a series of small antennas within the building and radiating cable that would be fixed to existing cable trays externally at upper basement level. 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 external antenna having a visual impact not significantly greater than a television aerial and mainly invisible internal work. 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 impact upon residential amenity. The proposal utilises an existing building. The specific requirement to provide in-building coverage to The Midland Hotel means that sharing an existing telecommunications site is not an option.

5.5 ***Impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and the listed building***

The external antenna will have minimal impact given its appearance and elevated siting. The antenna will be mounted where it is set back from the nearest road frontage by about 10 metres. Although is will be possible to view the antenna, it will be from distant viewpoints, with the antenna being at 8th storey level. The antenna will be viewed against the rooftop lift motor room building. The antenna will be clamped to steelwork, with the cabling entering the building through the plant room wall, which involves a 15mm hole through a modern brick and blockwork wall (see Photo 2 on Dwg 02B and Photos 4 and 5 on Dwg 14A). The Cell Enhancer Units and battery Back Up Units will be fixed to concrete blockwork (see elevation on

Dwg 02B and Photo 6 on Dwg 14A). The radiating cable will be fixed to an existing cable tray with cable ties (see Photo 7 on Dwg 14A). The omni antennas will be similar in size to a small domestic smoke detector. Apart from one surface-mounted antenna at ground floor level (see Miscellaneous Photographs document) the antennas will be mounted on existing cable trays (cable tied) or sit above existing ceilings, without any fixing required at all. The maximum potential physical impact upon the building would be mounting with the use of 50mm deep holes for 7mm diameter rawlplugs. The cables will use cable ties. Because of the above factors, it is therefore considered that character of the Conservation area will be preserved as the proposal will not adversely impact upon the historic and architectural character of the listed building.

5.6 ***Impact on the residential amenity***

Again, the design similar in scale to a TV aerial, together with the separation from any residential accommodation means that impact upon residential amenity will be negligible. Having regards to health issues, as stated in paragraph 1.6, 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. Access will 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 historic and architectural character of the listed building.

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.

The cabling will have negligible impact, utilising existing cable runs.

The omni antennas are similar in size to a smoke detector. With the exception of one antenna, they will be hidden from view above ceilings and located along existing service routes.

As explained, given the particular circumstances and requirement to provide in-building coverage to The Midland 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 planning permission is granted and that the proposal is granted listed building consent.

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. MAN532A-GA-01A, 02B 03A to 14A
4. Coverage Plots
5. ICNIRP Certificate
6. Miscellaneous Photographs document.