

Appeal Decisions

Site visit carried out on 4 September 2014

by Jennifer A Vyse DipTp DipPBM MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 17 September 2014

Appeal A: APP/Y5420/A/14/2213810

Hornsey Town Hall, The Broadway, London N8 9JJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Telefonica UK Limited (O2) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Haringey.
 - The application No HGY/2013/1706, dated 15 August 2013, was refused by a notice dated 9 October 2013.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 3 No antennas and associated ancillary development.
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Appeal B: APP/Y5420/E/14/2213816

Hornsey Town Hall, The Broadway, London N8 9JJ

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Telefonica UK Limited (O2) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Haringey.
 - The application No HGY/2013/1707, dated 15 August 2013, was refused by a notice dated 9 October 2013.
 - The works proposed comprise the installation of 3 No antennas and associated ancillary development.
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Decisions

1. For the reasons that follow **Appeal A** is dismissed and **Appeal B** is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue relates to the effect of the proposed antennas on the special architectural and historic interest of the appeal building and on the character and appearance of Crouch End Conservation Area.

Reasons for the Decision

3. The extensive Conservation Area is divided into smaller character areas, the appeal site lying within Sub Area 1 '*The Core Area: Crouch End Town Centre*'. The special interest of the Core Area derives from the historic street pattern that predates the existing buildings, and the buildings themselves, which have a distinctive and broadly consistent late Victorian and early Edwardian character and appearance, interrupted by a number of later infill buildings. The otherwise consistent back of pavement building line is disrupted on the east side of The Broadway, where older buildings have been removed to create the 20th Century Art Deco influenced complex of civic buildings (including the former Town Hall) and associated open spaces. That complex also plays an important part in defining the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4. The grade II* listed Town Hall and adjoining Public Assembly Hall, form a boldly massed, asymmetric architectural centrepiece along the eastern edge of the public square. These flat roofed buildings are centred around a tall rectangular tower that marks the entrance to the Town Hall. A decorative entrance door is located at the base of the tower, below a tall window with a copper grille and bronze hood. The uppermost stage of the tower has four open vertical slits on each of the four elevations which, as noted by English Heritage, *'add prominence to the tower, reinforcing its verticality and appearance of height.'* The west facing elevation, which overlooks the public square, has a flag pole attached above the slit openings, projecting above the top of the tower. Even though the now former Town Hall is falling into disrepair and is on the English Heritage 'At Risk' Register, the tower still forms a notable local landmark, visible from many parts of the Conservation Area, its special interest and significance deriving from its characteristic Art Deco influenced style, and the role it plays as a focal point within the civic complex.
5. In 2002, the Council granted approval for the installation six 2 metre high antennas on the tower, one each within the outermost two slits on each of the east, south and west elevations.¹ In the event, whilst the supporting framework was erected, only three antennas were installed.
6. Much of the equipment associated with the antennas now proposed would be placed with the existing equipment, inside the tower. There would be no material harm, in this regard, to the historic fabric or architectural interest of the listed building. However, it is also proposed to install three antennas within the slitted openings that would have been occupied by the antennas previously approved but not installed. Each would have a width of 0.6 metres and a maximum overall height of approximately 1.8 metres² and would be of a dark grey/black colouring.
7. Notwithstanding that they benefit from consent, I consider the installed antennas to be visually disruptive. They can quite clearly be seen in marked contrast to the shadowed, slitted openings, obscuring views through the top of the tower from some aspects. Even having regard to the appellant's offer to repaint them in a darker colour, I consider that the antennas add clutter at this high level, blurring the crisp, sharp lines and sense of relief created by the vertical openings. As such, they do not provide a compelling precedent for the appeal proposal. The placing of additional antennas in three more of the openings would further disrupt the carefully balanced and distinctive detailing that defines the dating and style of the tower, continuing the trend of erosion and harming the special interest and thus significance of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal would be contrary, therefore, to policy 7.8 of the London Plan, policy SP12 of the Haringey Local Plan 2013 and saved policies UD11 and CSV4 of the Haringey Unitary Development Plan 2006, which policies seek to prevent such harm.
8. Whilst the harm to the significance of the heritage assets would, with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework be less than substantial it is, nevertheless, a real and serious harm and requires clear and convincing justification. In considering this appeal, I have taken into account the support given in both local policy and national guidance to new telecommunications facilities, subject to appropriate safeguards. I recognise, in this respect, the

¹ Application No HGY/2002/0992 approval for six antennas, radio equipment housing and ancillary development.

² Measurements taken from the information set out on drawing No 501A.

technical and operational advantages to the appellant of the location proposed and the public benefit of improving 4G coverage in the area. On balance, however, I am not persuaded that this wider public benefit is sufficient to outweigh the identified harm. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeals should not succeed.

Jennifer A Vyse

INSPECTOR