

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Henry Thomas.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/00555/FP	Installation of 3no. replacement antenna and ancillary radio equipment onto new and existing support poles at existing rooftop site and ancillary development thereto.	BT Exchange Letchworth Nevells Road Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 4TS

Submitted Plan Nos

167674 ML004 Rev 4 1676-22-160-MD027A 1676-22-161-MD027A 167674-22-002 MD027 A 167674-22-110 MD027A

1.0 Policies

D1	Sustainable design
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts
SECN6	Building strong, competitive economy
SECN10	Supporting high quality communications
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SP9	Design and Sustainability
T1	Assessment of transport matters
T2	Parking
HE1	Designated heritage assets

2.0 **Relevant site history**

- 2.1 17/04096/FP - Upgrading of existing rooftop monopole through the introduction of additional steelworks that will allow the re-positioning of the existing 3 No. antennas and the provision of an additional 3 No. antennas together with feeder cables, and ancillary development thereto.

- 2.2 15/00987/1TD - Installation of a ground based equipment cabinet (0.75m x 0.6m x 2m) in the car park area and the direct replacement of the existing 3 no. mast head amplifier (MHA) units with 3 no. new MHAs with associated feeder cables and ancillary development.
- 2.3 13/02250/1TD - Installation of 2 no. 30cm transmission dishes on the existing rooftop monopole stub-mast with ancillary development including support brackets and feeder cables
- 2.4 05/01008/1 - Installation of 2 x 0.3m microwave dishes on existing roof top tower.
- 2.5 04/00852/1EC - Addition of 3 x 3G antennas to existing monopole
- 2.6 00/00887/1 - Erection of one 5 metre monopole with three cross polar antennas and equipment cabin

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Notification** – None received.
- 3.2 **HCC Highways** – None received.
- 3.3 **Environmental Health Officer** – No objections.
- 3.4 **Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation** – None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The BT Exchange building occupies a prominent corner position with Bridge Road and Nevells Road opposite the Spirella Building with the railway line on its south side. The building has a grass verge and trees setting with the road frontages, a rear car park area and there is existing apparatus on the rooftop. The site is within the Letchworth Conservation Area.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Installation of 3no. replacement antenna and ancillary radio equipment onto new and existing support poles at existing rooftop site and ancillary development thereto.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key material considerations are whether the development is acceptable in principle, character and appearance, impacts on neighbour amenity, and impacts on the public highway.

Principle

- 4.3.2 Section 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that planning decisions should support the expansion of electronic communication networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G). Paragraph 120 of the NPPF sets out that use of existing masts,

buildings and other structures should be encouraged and where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

- 4.3.3 Policy SP2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 sets out that the majority of development will be located within the settlement boundaries of towns including Letchworth. The proposed development would therefore be considered acceptable in principle.

Design and appearance

- 4.3.4 The objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include those seeking to secure the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that “*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable communities*”. In this regard, Policy D1 and D2 of the North Herts Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.
- 4.3.5 Policy D1 of the North Herts Local Plan sets out that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that respond positively to the site’s local context, create or enhance the public realm, and reduce energy consumption and waste.
- 4.3.6 There are no objections to the replacement antenna and ancillary radio equipment, given the presence of the existing. The replacements would have a similar visual appearance to the existing. The proposal would not alter the character and appearance of the building or the Conservation Area.

Neighbour amenity

- 4.3.4 The proposed replacement antenna and radio equipment would not alter the existing relationship between the mast and the neighbouring dwellings. In any case, the mast is set back sufficiently and would not impact neighbouring amenity. The application was accompanied by a Declaration of Conformity with the International Commission and did not receive objections from the Council’s Environmental Health Officer, therefore there are no grounds to object in relation to health. I do not consider that harm would be caused to amenity, while there will be benefits to nearby residents from improved communications. Impacts on amenity are considered acceptable.

Highways

- 4.3.6 Although no comment was received from the Highways Officer, due to the reasons set out in the report, the alterations to the mast would not have an impact upon the public realm or upon highway safety.

Environmental Implications

- 4.3.7 The proposed development would be relatively small in scale and would have no significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.3.8 The proposed development is considered 'de minimis' and would not exceed the threshold of 25 sqm of on-site habitat, or and/ less than 5 meters of linear habitats. This application is therefore exempt from BNG legislation defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **GRANTED**.

5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

Biodiversity Net Gain

1. This development is not subject to the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan condition because it is considered exempt under the statutory exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>) or transitional arrangements in respect of the biodiversity gain condition.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant

to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 19 May 2025	