

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0412
Valid 01/07/2021

FLAG TOWER
ALTON TOWERS FARLEY
LANE
FARLEY

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
FOR 18.0M PHASE 8
MONOPOLE C/W
WRAPROUND CABINET AT
BASE AND ASSOCIATED
ANCILLARY WORKS.

(LISTED BUILDING CONSENT)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the character and integrity of this Grade II Listed building

DESCRIPTION OF SITE.

The application relates to the Grade II Listed Flag Tower at Alton Towers which is also situated within the Registered Park and Gardens and within the Conservation Area. The Flag Tower has become an established communications base over a number of years.

PROPOSAL

This proposal is for an upgrade to an existing site at Alton Towers. It comprises:-

- a) 2 H3G GPS router onto existing support pole at the rear of two turrets
- b) 3 replaced Huawei antennas outside the tower
- c) Internal. Replacement equipment cabinet

The applicant states that the proposed development is required to provide improved connectivity and network enhancement to Three services in the area. The proposed infrastructure will be compatible with the next generation of wireless technology.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
DC 2 Heritage assets

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY

There is an exhaustive number of applications associated with the tower. These are within the last five years:

SMD/2020/0715	Listed building consent for a proposed development comprises the installation of 3 No. new 4G/5G EE antennae located on the face of the one northerly facing and one southerly facing flag tower turrets painted black /grey to match existing EE antenna thereon. On the roof of the Flag Tower behind the parapet further ancillary apparatus will be located consisting of feeder cable tray and feeder cabling, 3 No 'BoB's', 3 No. AHEGB's 3 No AHHB/RRH's, 3 No AZQL/RRH's and 3 No. E14R00P42's. All other electronic apparatus will be located internally on the second floor of the flag tower within the existing racks and supported from steel frame walkway.	24-03-21
SMD/2020/0714	The proposed development comprises the installation of 3 No. new 4G/5G EE	24-03-21
SMD/2016/0248	Listed Building Consent for the installation of 1x0.3m dish antennas onto the existing Airwave telecommunications kit for the emergency services networks only.	08/06/16

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 06/08/21

Neighbour consultation period ends: 28/07/21

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments None

Alton Parish Council No objection

Environmental Health No objection

Conservation Officer No objection subject to condition ensuring that any drilling into stone walling is to be undertaken in mortar joints and the antennas are to match the existing antennas.

Heritage England Do not wish to comment

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

This application (Planning and LBC) is for additional telecommunications equipment on the Grade II Listed Flag Tower at Alton Towers. The site is within the Registered Park and Gardens and within the Conservation Area.

Policy DC2 of the Local Plan seeks to conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. It says that protection of such assets and their setting will be given as set out in the NPPF. The NPPF also seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Para 194 says that any harm to the significance of a designated asset should require clear and convincing justification. Para 196 says that where harm is judged to be less than substantial, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. In addition to this LPAs have a statutory duty under the 1990 Act to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving Listed buildings or their setting and that of Conservation Areas.

Para 112 of the NPPF recognises the importance of high quality communications. It says that, 'Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being'. The importance of this has been highlighted during the Covid pandemic with the shift to home/mobile working. The success of agile working is highly reliant upon good quality communication. It goes on to say that LPA's should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology such as 5G and full fibre broadband connections. Para 113 emphasises that the number of masts and sites for such installations should be kept to a minimum and that site sharing rather than new sites should be encouraged. Para 116 confirms that LPA's should not prevent competition between operators nor question the need for an electronic communications system.

Analysis

The Flag Tower has become an established communications base over a number of years. The parapet walls are clustered with antennas. Against the policy background above, the applicant has provided the necessary justification for the proposed equipment on this existing base.

The Conservation Officer has considered the application and submitted Heritage Statement. She has no objection to proposed works as it's largely replacement 'like-for-like' and the increase in size of the three antennas is going to be negligible given the height of the flag tower and proximity to other equipment of a similar size. The visual impact on the historic/architectural significance of the Listed Flag Tower will be minimal and constitute no greater level of harm than what is existing. This is subject to a condition ensuring that the colour matches the colour of other antennas and, fixing to be into mortar joints and not drilled directly into the stone.

On this basis, the proposed works is deemed visually acceptable that will enable deployment of the latest 5G technologies along with maintaining a service for existing technologies. As such there is compliance with Policy DC2 and the NPPF.

Environmental Health have raised no concerns to the proposal.

A recommendation of approval is therefore made.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Approve**

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 20/09/21

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council