

Design & Access Statement

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR A TRAINING TOWER



Photo courtesy of Google Maps

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Introduction/Context

This statement is produced to support a planning application for training tower 17m tall for users of harness and working at height equipment.

Unitex UK is a textile manufacturing Group in Leek. Employing 96 staff, mostly living in Leek.

One of their companies, Ridgegear, manufactures equipment for working at height. Their key customers include British Telecom/Openreach for whom Ridgegear manufactures all their safety harnesses and lanyards.

A key aspect to working safely at height is to be trained to do so. Classroom training has its limitations, trainees really need to be, trained and observed whilst actually 'at height'.

In the past three years they have established a training division with three full-time staff doing at height training. In order to continue to grow this business and expand this team they would like to install a training tower – a pylon 17m high on which they can train customers to work safely at height.

The pylon would only be used in office hours Monday to Friday.

Proposal

The proposal is to erect a lattice pylon mimicking the type of tower the British Telecom trainees would expect to be working, 17m tall. The pylon shall be positioned in an area at the rear (western) corner of the factory complex, adjacent to the building currently used as an indoor climbing area/training facility. They already have two timber poles in the area for training.

The area is located a distance from the nearest properties, the closest being 48 metres away separated by a stand of Sycamore trees approx. 13.8m. The minimum distance we would need to separate dwellings from being overlooked is 22 metres between windows to habitable rooms, so there is no overlooking issues to properties or loss of amenity.

The location borders Fowlchurch road, separated by the Sycamore trees as noted above.

It is unlikely that anyone outside of the Unitex site would be aware of the training tower being in use or the operatives on the tower during a training session. The tower shall be a replica of the type of tower the Telecoms operatives would encounter during their working day, with a exception of the comms equipment which would not be fitted to the pylon.

The purpose of the training facility is solely to ensure that the operatives can work safely at height using the equipment supplied by Ridgegear. Training on communication equipment would be given elsewhere.

Layout

The proposed training tower shall be located in a courtyard area bordered on 3 sides by the buildings on the site, and the stand of Sycamore trees forming the 4th side. The position of the proposed tower would be in the mid position between the roller door and the side wall as indicated below.



The training facility itself is in the building to the left of the photograph above. In the photograph below the training facility is on the right and the stand of trees forms the boundary to Fowlchurch road.



Scale

The scale of the development is a 17 m high pylon is suitable for the proposed use and would be a replica of the pylon a telecoms engineer would need to climb to carry out work. If the tower was to any lower, then it wouldn't be suitable for the proposed use.

Appearance

The proposed development would be a galvanised metal tower 17m tall having 3 legs forming a triangle shape on plan, 1.6m between each leg, diminishing/tapering as the tower rises.

Access

There is no change to the access or parking to the site. The proposed use of the tower would provide an additional training facility for the telecoms personnel who would be already on site for training. There is adequate parking on the property as existing for the proposals, and it would not generate any additional staff or visitors to the site.