
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 5 March 2025

by **Susan Heywood BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 March 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Z4310/W/24/3354898

Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Ranelagh Place, LIVERPOOL, L3 5UL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by EE UK Ltd & Hutchison UK Ltd against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24F/0872.
 - The development proposed is Proposed NTQ (Notice to Quit) telecommunications installation (C/L OF APERTURES +39.0m AGL) and associated works at The Adelphi Hotel.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Z4310/Y/24/3354899

Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Ranelagh Place, LIVERPOOL, L3 5UL

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by EE UK Ltd & Hutchison UK Ltd against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24L/0920.
 - The works proposed are Proposed NTQ (Notice to Quit) telecommunications installation (C/L OF APERTURES +39.0m AGL) and associated works at The Adelphi Hotel.
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Decision

Appeal A Ref: APP/Z4310/W/24/3354898

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B Ref: APP/Z4310/Y/24/3354899

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

3. The proposals are described on the Council's decision notices as "to install rooftop telecommunications equipment and associated ancillary works". They include the following:
 - To the southwestern corner of the roof, one tripod on concrete plinth to carry two antennas and two dishes.
 - To the southeastern wing of the roof two tripods on concrete plinths to carry two antennas and one dish each.
 - To the centre of the south of the roof, four outdoor cabinets on freestanding frames.
 - 1.1m high freestanding handrails.
 - 0.3m wide cable tray on rubber blocks.

- 0.91m wide demarcation walkway matting.
4. The proposed plans, elevations and visualisations appear contradictory in relation to one of the tripods on the southeastern wing of the roof. The plans indicate that one tripod would be located to the northern side of the projecting wing and the other to the southern side. The proposed south elevation drawing indicates that one tripod will be sited behind the other. However, the visualisations only show one tripod with associated antenna to the south side of that wing and do not show a tripod sited to the north side. Furthermore, the submitted drawings do not include the eastern building elevations, where the tripod to the northern side of the southeastern wing would have been expected to be shown. If I were minded to allow the appeals, I would have required further clarification on this point. As the appeals are dismissed, this has not been necessary.
 5. For the avoidance of doubt, I have considered the appeals on the basis that they include 3 tripods with associated antenna and dishes, sited in the locations indicated on the plan number 1717604_LPL260_76416_L0548_M001 Issue A.
 6. The proposed telecommunications cabinets do not require planning permission and therefore I have not considered these under Appeal A. However, they do require listed building consent. Accordingly, I have considered these under Appeal B only.

Main Issues

7. Having regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), the main issues are whether the proposals would preserve the special architectural interest of the Grade II listed Adelphi Hotel and the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

Special Interest and Significance

8. The Adelphi Hotel is included on the Statutory List at Grade II. It is a striking building situated in a prominent location on the junction of Ranelagh Street and the A5038. It is described in the list description as dating from 1912, constructed of Portland stone, consisting of 7 storeys and 11 bays. Features mentioned in the listing include the main entrance columns, round-arched windows with mask keystones, moulded cornice, central Ionic columns in front of 3 recessed bays, giant columns in bays next to the end, top cornice and balustrade with 7th floor above. It is noted that wings extend to rear at an obtuse angle.
9. Insofar as is relevant to the appeal proposals, the significance and special interest of the building derives from the symmetry of the architectural composition on its front elevation, together with the regularity in its window treatment and cornicing along the south elevation. The symmetry of the front elevation is emphasised in its architectural detailing with cornices, columns and pediments above the windows in the penultimate bays. This architectural detailing is echoed in the penultimate bay of the south elevation, at its southwestern corner. In addition, the height of the building and its prominent location in the street scene, the light-coloured materials and its plan form with wings extending to the rear all add to the significance and special interest of the building.

The effect of the proposals on significance

10. I deal firstly with the impact on the front elevation of the building. The proposed tripod and antenna would project above the roof top on the southwestern corner of the building. It would have a functional and utilitarian appearance which would be at odds with the decorative architecture on the frontage of the building. Due to its prominent siting, close to the edge of one side of the building, and its height above the parapet, the proposal would disrupt the symmetry of the frontage and would detract from the architectural composition of the front elevation.
11. Turning to the south side elevation of the building. This façade is less symmetrical than the frontage. Nonetheless, it displays a regularity and elegance in its architectural detailing. The penultimate bay on the southwestern corner is emphasised with columns, cornicing and pediment above giving the corner of the building architectural emphasis in the street scene.
12. The utilitarian appearance of the proposed antenna in the southwestern corner, its siting close to the edge of the building, and the height of the projection would disrupt the regularity of the architecture and would detract from the elegant appearance of the corner of the building when viewed from the south, most notably from Mount Pleasant.
13. I turn now to consider the tripods and antennas on the rear projecting wing to the southeast of the building. As set out above, regularity of architectural detailing is a feature of the south elevation. However, the southeastern corner of the building is plainer and does not display the same architectural emphasis as the southwestern corner. Even so, the proposed antenna on the southern corner of the wing would appear visually obtrusive and discordant and would detract from the simple elegance of the south elevation.
14. The eastern and northern elevations of the projecting wing are more functional in appearance and one of the fire escape staircases for the hotel is sited on the eastern wall. This is mirrored on the northern wing and the service yard is also located to the eastern, rear elevation. The eastern elevation of the building therefore has less architectural importance than the front or southern side elevation. Nevertheless, when viewed from the east, the appearance, height above the roof and prominent siting of the proposed tripods and antennas would result in visual clutter which would detract from the appearance of the building, albeit to a lesser extent than when viewed from the south.
15. From Brownlow Hill all three of the tripods and antennas would be visible when travelling down the hill towards the building. The cumulative impact of the structures would be visually discordant and would detract from the significance of the building.
16. I have had regard to the fact that the tripod masts proposed are considered by the appellant to minimise the visual impact. However, this does not alter my conclusions in relation to the impact of the proposals. For the above reasons, the proposed tripods, antennas and dishes would be harmful to the listed building and would harm the character and appearance of the surroundings.
17. In relation to Appeal B only, the proposed outdoor cabinets would have a limited visual impact due to the angle at which they would be viewed from ground level. Nevertheless, where they could be viewed – mainly along Mount Pleasant - they

would appear as functional, utilitarian additions which would add to the visual clutter on the roof of the building. They would therefore appear discordant in the context of the regularity and elegance of the southern elevation. These structures would add to the identified harm to the listed building, albeit to a limited degree.

18. The other aspects of the proposals, the handrails, cable tray and walkway matting, would appear to have limited physical or visual intrusion. The Council does not raise any specific concerns regarding these aspects of the proposals. These aspects would cause limited harm to the listed building.
19. There are existing flagpoles which project from the roof towards the front elevation of the building and the appellant states that the southwestern antenna would have little more visual impact than these. However, as there is one on either side of the roof, the flagpoles display a symmetry which the antenna in question would not have. Furthermore, these flagpoles are set in from the edges of the building and have a slimmer appearance than the proposed tripod, antenna and dishes. They do not therefore have the same visual impact.
20. The Radio City tower is a prominent feature in the skyline of this part of the city. However, it is only visible in the same view as the Adelphi building from some vantage points. This building clearly reads as a separate structure which is part of the skyline, but which has its own form and character, completely distinct from the Adelphi Hotel. The presence of this building does not diminish the harm that would be caused by the proposals.
21. The proposals would be screened by street trees from some locations but, due to the height and prominence of the building and location of street trees, this would not reduce the harm caused by the proposals from the majority of vantage points.
22. The appellant has referred to the proliferation of street signage and lampposts at street level. However, these are seen at street level against a backdrop of buildings and in the context of the activity and movement of a busy city centre. The proposals would be situated above roof level and seen against the backdrop of the sky where there is little or no activity to detract the eye of the viewer from the appearance of the structures. This factor does not therefore reduce the harm caused by the proposals.
23. Having regard to the above, and mindful of the duties arising from the Act, I conclude that the proposals would fail to preserve the Grade II listed Adelphi Hotel and its special interest. I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance below. The proposals would also harm the character and appearance of the area.
24. The Council have referred to a number of policies in the Liverpool Local Plan (adopted 2022) which they say the proposals would conflict with. The most important of those in relation to the proposals are policy HD1 and STP2(n) which seek, amongst other things, to ensure that proposals conserve the significance of designated heritage assets. Policy UD1, UD2 and UD7 relate to the design of development, including skyline impact, and character of the area. The proposals would conflict with these policies.

Other matters

25. The proposals are required due to a Notice to Quit being issued for the existing mast at Club 051 to the south of the appeal site, on the corner of Mount Pleasant and Brownlow Hill. The Council granted permission for a previous proposal on Redmonds Building, Brownlow Hill but this was subsequently unable to proceed, and I understand that permission will now have lapsed.
26. A new mast location is required to maintain and improve mobile network coverage within the Central Liverpool area and avoid dead spots of no coverage. The proposals would also allow improved 5G coverage. Specifically, it would provide coverage for EE, H3G LTE, who have a mast sharing agreement, and ESN (Emergency Services Network).
27. Paragraph 119 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G). I note that policy STP2 encourages economic growth and a strong, responsive and competitive economy and policy STP4 supports the provision of new infrastructure in certain circumstances.
28. The appellant refers to a letter to Chief Planning Officers: Planning for Growth, dated 31 March 2011 which emphasises the need to secure economic growth and employment. Whilst this is now of some significant age and was issued by a previous Government, it is not inconsistent with the messages of the current Government in relation to the need for growth.
29. The Framework states that the number of masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Paragraph 120 encourages the use of existing masts, buildings and other structures. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.
30. I understand that the geographical cell search area is constrained in this case, and I note that a number of alternative options within the area have been discounted for various reasons, none of which are disputed by the Council. However, the Council refer to the possibility of sharing existing masts on the roof of Lime Court, 58-60 Lime Street which do not appear to have been considered by the appellants.
31. Neither do the appellants appear to have considered other locations on the roof of the Adelphi Hotel, although I note that the Council have accepted that the masts and antenna cannot be sited further away from the edges of the building unless they are increased significantly in height.
32. Whilst the economic and social benefits of the proposals weigh in favour of the appeals, for the reasons set out above, I do not consider that the masts in this case have been sympathetically designed to accord with the Framework. The apparent omission of consideration of potential alternatives identified by the Council also reduces the weight I give to the need for the proposals in the identified locations.

33. Whilst the appellants refer to the use of the network by ESN, there is no indication that this would not work effectively without the proposals. This matter does not therefore weigh in favour of the appeals.
34. Whilst I note the reference to appeal decision (APP/H5390/W/20/3260941), it appears that that decision related to the setting of nearby listed buildings rather than direct impact to a listed building. I also note that the Inspector in that case did not find any harm taking into account the specific factors in that case. The matters before me are different and that case is not therefore comparable to the current appeals.

Planning Balance and Conclusions

35. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed Adelphi Hotel. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of these appeals.
36. Given the scale and nature of the proposals, I conclude that they would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the building. Nevertheless, paragraph 212 the Framework sets out that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation irrespective of the level of harm to its significance. Moreover, at paragraph 215 the Framework states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.
37. The public benefits of the proposals would be the need for and economic and social benefits of maintaining and improving coverage. For the reasons set out above, these matters would not be of sufficient weight to tip the overall planning balance in their favour when set against the great weight to be given to the asset's conservation.
38. Accordingly, the proposals would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, the Framework and the identified policies of the Liverpool Local Plan.
39. Whilst some Local Plan policies contain criteria which support the proposal, due to the great weight to be given to the preservation of listed buildings, I conclude, in respect of Appeal A, that the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. No material considerations advanced in favour of the proposals are of a sufficient weight to justify a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.
40. For the above reasons and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

Susan Heywood

INSPECTOR

Appendix 1

List of those who have appealed

Reference	Case Reference	Appellant
Appeal A	APP/Z4310/W/24/3354898	EE UK Ltd & Hutchison UK Ltd
Appeal B	APP/Z4310/Y/24/3354899	EE UK Ltd & Hutchison UK Ltd