

Proposed Upgrade to existing site
EE 62399 – 35 Castle Street, Reading RG1 7SB

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & HERITAGE STATEMENT

This further statement is submitted as an addition to the Design and Access Statement submitted as part of the Planning and Listed Building applications in relation to the above proposal.

In accordance with the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development, and published Government guidance, this proposal was drawn up having regard to the need for good design.

Background and Requirement

This particular scheme has resulted from a requirement for EE Ltd to provide improved services, network coverage and capacity.

The advent of 'smart phones' and other similar devices has seen a substantial increase in traffic, and in locations where local coverage is poor or stretched, the existing equipment may not provide sufficient coverage, penetration and capacity.

In addition, in areas where the use of phones is particularly high, such as major towns or cities, many sites will reach the maximum number of calls they can process. When a customer attempts to make a call in an area where the network has reached its full capacity, the 'network busy' message is displayed on their mobile phone. In order to continue to meet customer demand and maintain the quality of services in these areas, there is a need to preserve the capacity of the network to allow more calls to be made.

Application Building (Heritage Asset)

35 Castle Street dates from the early 19th century (part of 33 to 37 Castle Street), and has been in use as primarily a retail unit ever since. The building has hosted telecommunications equipment for some years, and the equipment in place is respectful of the architectural and historic interest associated with the site.

The scheme planned by EE is intended to respect all elements of the building and have a very limited impact, such that it will have no discernible effect.

Impact on the Building (Heritage Asset)

We are conscious of the need to respect the historic environment of the building, given that it is Grade II listed, while at the same time, ensuring that the required coverage is provided.

The existing microcell antennas fixed to the building are not being altered. These works merely entail some minor revisions to the equipment that is located in a small rear courtyard, largely screened by an existing small stairway.

The existing equipment needs to be updated to provide for current customer demands and to provide modern network services. In order to limit the impact, the scheme seeks to remove an existing small item of equipment (a metrosite cabinet), and install 2 no. small cabinets in its place.

The 2 new cabinets will be adjacent to those existing and will be hidden from view adjacent to the walkway. The scheme is designed to provide the required improved coverage and capacity from this modest deployment

We do not believe that the subject scheme will have any material or detrimental impact on the historical or architectural features of the building, or its setting.

Resultant Design of Scheme

We have taken care to ensure that the subject proposal has a very minimal impact on the building.

In particular:

- The existing antennas are being re-used.
- 1 no cabinet is being removed, and just 2 no. small cabinets are being put in its place.
- The cabinets will be finished to ensure that they blend with the background and surrounding elements.