



Glasgow City Council

Planning Local Review Committee

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods,  
Regeneration and Sustainability

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**Item 1**

25th November 2025

**25/00073/LOCAL – The Lorne Hotel, 923 Sauchiehall Street  
Installation of telecommunications equipment upgrade and associated  
works**

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide the Committee with a summary of the relevant considerations in the above review.

**Recommendations:**

That Committee consider the content of this report in coming to their decision.

Ward No(s): 10

Citywide: n/a

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:**

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## **1 LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATIONS**

- 1.1 The proposed development would be sited on the roof of the former Lorne Hotel. The building dates from 1960s and is currently being converted to student accommodation. As part of the conversion, the façade of the building was stripped and re-clad with a rainscreen system that uses natural sandstone. An upper floor was added to the building which is set back from the principal façade and clad in matt gold aluminium panels.
- 1.2 The site is in Park Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to the Category A listed 901-903 Sauchiehall Street.
- 1.3 There is a plantroom which projects approximately 4.4 metres above the roof at its western end. The plantroom is a prominent feature of the building and is visible in both eastward and westward views along Sauchiehall Street. It is finished in light grey painted render. There is existing telecommunications equipment on the roof including wall-mounted antennas on the plantroom, equipment cabinets and a replica flagpole antenna. This equipment will be removed as part of the proposed upgrade.
- 1.4 The building connects to the Category A listed 901-903 Sauchiehall Street on the corner of Sauchiehall Street and Kelvingrove Street. The listed building was part of the Lorne Hotel and is also being converted to student accommodation. It is outwith the site boundary of this application.
- 1.5 The proposal is to install telecommunications equipment on the roof of the building. The proposal includes:
  - Removal of existing wall-mounted antennas, existing replica flagpole antenna and 3no. equipment cabinets.
  - Erection of a new Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) enclosure on top of the existing plantroom. The enclosure will contain 6no. antennas, 4no. dishes and ancillary equipment. The GRP enclosure will be approximately 3.3 metres high, 2 metres deep and 2.7 metres wide. It will be painted grey to match the existing plantroom.
  - Installation of 6no. replacement equipment cabinets onto the existing freestanding support frames.

## **2 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**

- 2.1 The relevant National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and City Development Plan (CDP) policies and Supplementary Guidance are:

|           |                            |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| Policy 7  | Historic assets and places |
| Policy 14 | Design, Quality and Place  |
| Policy 27 | Digital infrastructure     |

- 2.2 The relevant City Development Plan policies and Supplementary Guidance are:
- |       |                              |
|-------|------------------------------|
| CDP 1 | The Placemaking Principle    |
| CDP 2 | Sustainable Spatial Strategy |
| CDP 3 | Economic Development         |
| CDP 9 | Historic Environment         |
| SG 1  | Placemaking                  |
| IPG 3 | Economic Development         |
| SG 9  | Historic Environment         |

### **3 REASONS FOR REFUSAL / RELEVANT CONDITION(S)**

3.1 The reasons for refusal are set out below:

- 1) The proposal was not considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan and there were no material considerations which outweighed the proposal's variance with the Development Plan.
- 2) The proposed development is contrary to Policy 7 Historic assets and places; Policy 14 Design, quality and place; and Policy 24 Digital infrastructure and CDP 1 The & SG 1 on Placemaking; CDP 3 & IPG 3 on Economic Development; and CDP 9 Historic Environment & SG 9 on Historic Environment of the Glasgow City Development Plan as specified below, and there is no overriding reason to depart therefrom.
- 3) The proposed development, by virtue of its siting, size, scale and design quality, would be a dominant addition to the roofscape that, in visual terms, would enlarge the existing plant room to form an incongruous and prominent massing in a highly visible and historically sensitive location. The proposed development would detract from the visual amenity of the area and result in a significant loss of character to Park Conservation Area and the setting of the Category A listed 901-903 Sauchiehall Street.

### **4 APPEAL STATEMENT**

4.1 A summary of the material points raised in the appeal statement is given below:

1. The upgrade is essential to improve 4G capacity and introduce 5G for Vodafone Three and VMO2, addressing a clear gap in coverage in this high-demand area of Glasgow. The resulting public benefits—including enhanced connectivity, economic growth, and community resilience—are significant material considerations weighing in favour of the proposal. Without this upgrade, no alternative options exist to meet the demand for improved 4G and new 5G coverage in this area.

2. The siting, scale, and appearance of the proposed rooftop equipment would not cause unacceptable harm to the Park Conservation Area, nearby listed buildings, or the wider roofscape, and any minor impact is outweighed by the scheme's significant public and operational benefits.
3. Historic Environment Scotland were consulted as part of the application process and raised no objections to the proposal, recognising that the development would not adversely affect the historic environment.
4. This long-established rooftop communications site is on a six-storey, flat-roofed building from the 1960s, recently converted to student accommodation with illuminated signage. A comprehensive search for alternative locations was undertaken and deemed "reasonable" by the Planning Officer, with the site considered "in principle, suitable" for the upgrade.
5. The design was refined through pre-application consultation with Glasgow City Council, reducing antenna heights to the minimum necessary while maintaining operational and ICNIRP compliance. This allowed the GRP enclosure to be minimized in size and coloured to match the existing rooftop plant room, enclosing the antennas and ancillary equipment to reduce visual impact. The result is a discreet rooftop installation that delivers essential mobile network improvements.
6. Policy guidance acknowledges that rooftop communications equipment will have some visual presence. However, the GRP enclosure is designed to be recessive and integrated with the existing rooftop plant room, and would not materially detract from the character of the Conservation Area or nearby listed buildings.
7. During pre-application discussions, the Council suggested a more creative screening solution incorporating the plant room. However, given the required location of the equipment, a smaller, simpler GRP enclosure was considered more appropriate to avoid drawing attention to the existing plant room, described by the Planning Officer as "a large and incongruous mass." The minimalist design integrates with the rooftop while ensuring operational effectiveness, avoiding a bulkier, more visually intrusive structure, and represents the best balance between visual sensitivity and technical necessity.
8. The scheme fully accords with the overarching aims of NPF4 and the Glasgow City Development Plan, delivering high-quality digital infrastructure in a sensitive, design-led manner. Any limited visual effects are outweighed by the compelling technical, social, and economic benefits, and the proposal should therefore be approved.
9. No objections were received from Historic Environment Scotland, other consultees, or the public following notification. While the Planning Officer noted minor visual impact concerns, these are not supported by statutory or

third-party responses. The site selection is robust, and the proposal complies with design guidance.

## **5 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 5.1 Numerous planning and listed building applications were submitted in relation to the site's previous use as a hotel. Planning permission 22/01075/FUL was granted to convert the hotel to student accommodation in June 2023. Development is currently underway with the first tenants expected in September 2025.

## **6 REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS**

- 6.1 No representations were received. HES was consulted but did not respond.

## **7 COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The key issues for Committee to consider are:

### **7.2 Digital telecommunication**

NPF4 Policy 24: Digital infrastructure, CDP 2: Sustainable Spatial Strategy and CDP 3: Economic Development & IPG 3 Economic Development

The intent of Policy 24 is to strongly support the delivery of future-proofed digital infrastructure, particularly in areas with low connectivity, by promoting development proposals that incorporate new or improved fixed-line and mobile networks. It also requires that visual and amenity impacts be minimised through careful siting, design, and materials.

CDP 2 and CDP 3 support the rollout of new digital and telecommunications infrastructure across the city.

IPG 3 expects applicants to demonstrate that their site has been identified and justified as the most appropriate solution following a search for alternative locations and options.

Committee should note that:

- The applicant has submitted an analysis of 18 alternative sites in the area as part of their Site-Specific Supplementary Information.
- The alternative sites were discounted for a variety of reasons including network coverage, International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) public exposure guidelines, land ownership and visual amenity.
- The applicant's site selection process is considered to be reasonable and that the application site is, in principle, suitable for the proposed telecommunications equipment upgrade.

Committee should consider whether:

- the proposed telecommunications equipment is justified as the most appropriate solution, having regard to the applicant's assessment of alternative sites?
- the development delivers significant public benefits, including improved connectivity and support for the local economy?
- the proposal complies with ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure and other technical requirements, and whether this provides sufficient reassurance regarding public safety?

### 7.3 Design and Placemaking

#### NPF4 Policy 14: Design, Quality and Place and CDP 1/SG1: The Placemaking principle

NPF4 Policy 14 and CDP1 are overarching placemaking policies which expect that new developments will be design-led and lead to an improvement in the quality of the built environment. NPF4 Policy 24 and CDP 3 (as supported by IPG 3) require that the visual impact of telecommunications equipment is minimised through careful and sensitive design and siting.

NPF4 Policy 14 states that development proposals should be designed to improve the quality of an area whether in urban or rural locations and regardless of scale. Development proposals will be supported where they are consistent with the six qualities of successful places: Healthy, Pleasant, Connected, Distinctive, Sustainable, Adaptable.

CDP 1 promotes a design-led, holistic approach to development across Glasgow. It requires that new development contributes to creating high-quality, successful places, considering physical, social, and economic context. The policy is supported by SG1, which requires new development to respond sensitively to its visual and physical context. This means assessing impacts on roofscape, building scale and massing, and views, and ensuring design is articulated (not monolithic) and well-integrated into the surroundings.

Committee should note that:

- The proposed development includes the erection of telecommunications equipment and associated enclosure on top of the plant room.
- The enclosure would be painted and finished grey to match that of the plant room.
- In visual terms, the proposal would increase the height and scale of the plant room and would exacerbate the adverse impact of an already incongruous massing on the roofscape.
- Equipment erected on top of the plant room is likely to be highly visible, this will adversely affect the visual amenity of the area.
- It is considered that the submitted design is engineering-led with an appearance that is typical of telecommunications equipment.
- The proposal does not display the architectural or design-led response that is required to preserve and enhance the view and special historic setting.

Committee should consider whether:

- the proposed design and siting of the telecommunications enclosure achieves an acceptable standard of visual integration?
- whether its increased height, bulk, and appearance result in an unacceptable visual impact on the roofscape?
- the applicant has demonstrated a sufficiently design-led approach?

## 7.4 Historic Environment

### NPF4 Policy 7: Historic assets and places and CDP 9/SG 9: Historic Environment

NPF4 Policy 7 and CDP 9 require that new developments preserve and enhance the character of listed buildings and conservation areas. SG 9 states that telecommunications apparatus should not be detrimental to the character or setting of a Listed Building or visual amenity of a Conservation Area. Planning permission is unlikely to be granted if rooftop apparatus would be seen against, and detract from, historic and architecturally renowned skylines.

The Park Conservation Area Appraisal states that views are one of the major identifying features of Park Conservation Area. A key view identified by Park Conservation Area Appraisal is the vista along Sauchiehall Street that terminates at the Category A listed 901-903 Sauchiehall Street and former Lorne Hotel. This part of Sauchiehall Street is characterised by 2-4 storey sandstone terraces.

Committee should note that:

- The rooftop plant room of the former Lorne Hotel is prominent in this view and, due to its position and height, plays a significant role in defining the roofline behind the listed building.
- The existing plant room is a large and incongruous massing.
- The applicant has made efforts to reduce the size of the proposed equipment and associated enclosure following pre-application discussions.
- The proposed development remains significant in size and will increase the scale and massing of the plant room.
- The site is visible from Corunna Street, which is a key view noted in the St Vincent Street Conservation Area Appraisal.

Committee should consider whether:

- the proposed telecommunications equipment and enclosure would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Park Conservation Area and the setting of the Category A listed building?
- the applicant has demonstrated a sufficiently design-led and heritage-sensitive approach, or whether further reduction in scale or a more architecturally integrated solution is necessary to protect the historic roofscape?
- The public and operational benefits of the upgraded telecommunications equipment outweigh the identified heritage and visual impacts on this highly sensitive historic environment.
- the increased height and massing of the already incongruous plant room would further detract from the key Sauchiehall Street or Corunna Street views?

## 8 COMMITTEE DECISION

8.1 The options available to the Committee are:

- a. Grant planning permission, with or without conditions;
- b. Refuse planning permission; or
- c. Continue the application for further information.

8.2 Section 43A(12)(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires that reasoning behind why the local review body has been decided be supplied in the decision notice. Should committee be minded to grant planning permission, material considerations that justify a departure from the plan would require to be identified.

## 9 Policy and Resource Implications

### Resource Implications:

*Financial:* n/a

*Legal:* n/a

*Personnel:* n/a

*Procurement:* n/a

**Council Strategic Plan:** n/a

### Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

*Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.* n/a

*What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?* no significant impact

*Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-* n/a

*economic  
disadvantage.*

**Climate Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:* n/a

*What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?* n/a

*Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?* n/a

**Privacy and Data  
Protection Impacts:**

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report  
N

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

**10 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Committee consider the content of this report in coming to their decision.