

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 10

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 25 April 2018

Ward: Abbey

App No.s: 172295/FUL & 172296/LBC

Address: 41 Minster Street

**Proposal:** Upgrade of existing rooftop base station comprising the relocation of an existing antenna and the provision of additional 3 No antennas together with feeder cables, steelworks and ancillary development.

**Applicant:** H3G & EE Ltd c/o Arqiva

**8 week target decision date:** 13 April 2018

**Extension of time date:** 27<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### RECOMMENDATION

#### 172295/FUL

Grant Full Planning Permission

#### CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Standard approved plans condition

#### INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Positive and proactive informative
2. Listed Building Consent ref. 172296 relates to this permission

#### 172296/LBC

Grant Listed Building Consent

#### CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Standard approved plans condition

#### INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

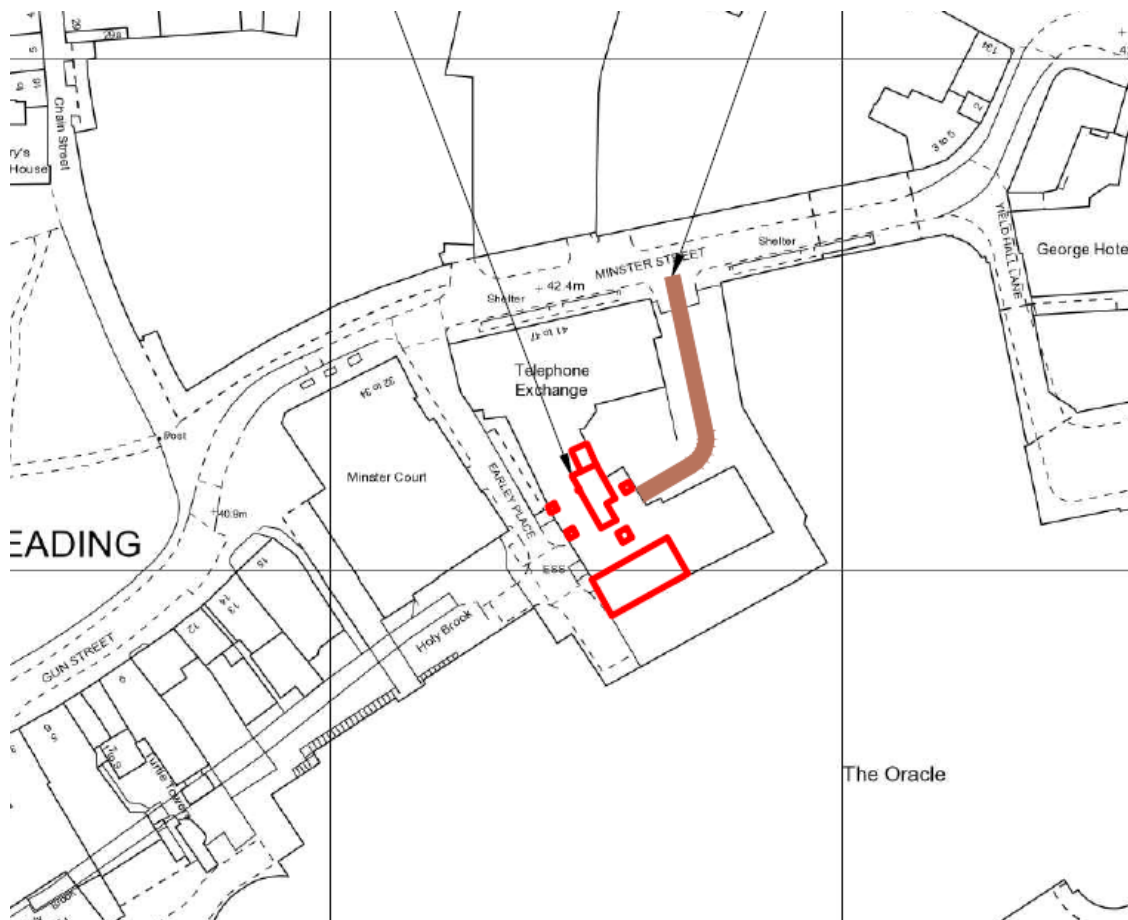
1. Positive and proactive informative

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application relates to the large Grade II listed BT Telephone Exchange building located at 41 -47 Minster Street, Reading. The three-storey building constructed circa 1900 is finished in red brick with stone dressings in an attenuated Georgian style. The Telephone Exchange was extended to the rear with a significant extension constructed circa 1960. There is significant existing telecommunications equipment to the roof levels of the building.

- 1.2 The site is located near the town centre and is surrounded by similar large buildings including John Lewis and The Oracle Centre (5-6 storeys). No. 41 is three storeys high facing Minster Street and five 5 storeys high at its rear.
- 1.3 The site is located within the Reading Central Area, Central Core in the Primary Shopping Area and within an existing designated Active Frontage. It is also adjacent to the eastern boundary of St. Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. Parts of the site are within flood zones 2 and 3.
- 1.4 Full planning permission is required for the development because 'Permitted Development Rights' do not apply to telecommunications development within the curtilage of listed buildings.
- 1.5 The applications are required to be determined by Planning Applications Committee because they relate to telecommunications development to a listed building and which is located within a conservation area.

### Site Location Plan



## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The applications seek full planning permission and listed building consent for upgrading of an existing rooftop telecommunications base station comprising the

relocation of an existing antenna and the provision of additional 3 No antennas together with feeder cables, steelworks and ancillary development.

2.2 The proposed works relate to the rooftop of the later 1960's extension to the listed building.

2.3 The main elements of the proposed upgrade works are:

- Repositioning of existing 1 No. antenna onto new 2.5m high pole;
- Upgrading of existing rooftop base station through the provision of additional 3 No. antennas on steelworks;
- Upgrading of existing rooftop cabinet;
- Provision of 3 No. Remote Radio Units (RRU) and 6 No. BOB unit to be fixed to steelworks at rooftop level; and
- The installation of cabling and associated works.

2.4 The works are proposed by H3G and EE as part of an upgrade to the existing base station to update the site's capacity and extend coverage

2.5 A declaration has been submitted by the applicant confirming compliance with the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) guidelines.

### 3. PLANNING HISTORY

#### 3.1 Relevant Planning History:

010200 - Communications switch room with existing building and installation of ventilation louvres to side elevation - Granted.

010354 - Installation of ventilation louvres to the side elevation (LBC) - Granted

010064 - Removal of three windows at 2nd floor level and installation of louvres into openings - Granted

011012 - Removal of 3 no windows at 2nd floor level and fitting louvres to openings (LBC) - Granted

011282 - Installation of new double door and ventilation louvres to front elevation and ground floor level - Granted

060124 - Installation of new louvres - Granted

060689 - Installation of new louvres (LBC) - Granted

100600 - To replace 5 windows on the ground floor with aluminium louvres to allow ventilation into and out of the telephone exchange - Granted

100263 - Listed Building Consent to replace 5 windows on the ground floor with aluminium louvres to allow ventilation into and out of the telephone exchange (LBC) - Granted

130638 - Installation of 3 ventilation louvres on the first floor west elevation -  
Granted

161433 - Removal of 3no.fixed window panes on the ground floor and replacement  
with aluminium weather louvres to match existing - Granted

### 3. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 RBC Transport - No objections.

4.2 Public consultation:

- Two site notices was displayed at the site. No letters of representation have been received.

### 5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

5.2 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

5.3 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

#### 5.4 National Planning Policy Framework

Part 5 - Supporting high quality communications infrastructure  
Part 7 - Requiring good design

#### 5.5 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008, 2015)

CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)  
CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)  
CS35 (Flooding)

#### 5.6 Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015)

SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)  
DM21 (Telecommunications Development)

#### 5.7 Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009)

RC5 (Design in the Centre)

## 6. APPRAISAL

6.1 Policy DM21 states that proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:

- They do not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area;
- The apparatus will be sited and designed so as to minimise its visual impact by the use of innovative design solutions such as lamp column 'swap-outs' or concealment/camouflage options; and
- Alternative sites and site-sharing options have been fully investigated and it has been demonstrated that no preferable alternative sites are potentially available which would result in a development that would be less visually intrusive.

*Impact on Visual Amenity, Historic Character of the Listed Building and setting of the Conservation Area*

6.2 The application site contains an existing roof top telecommunications base station where there is already significant telecommunications equipment and apparatus.

6.3 Much of the proposed equipment would be sited upon existing supporting infrastructure within the roof top base station or is replacing existing equipment with similar. Where new additional structures are proposed these would be located within the existing base station area and the highest element of the proposed new equipment (including the proposed new 2.5m high pole) would be set 1.5m below the highest element of the existing equipment. The proposed new equipment, by its nature and as per the existing roof top equipment, is narrow and slim and not considered to be visually prominent.

6.4 Located to the rear roof of modern extension to the listed building and within an already established telecommunications base station it is not considered that the modest proposed replacement and additional equipment would result in any material harm to the historic character of the listed building. As a roof top installation the existing base station is not readily visible from Minster Street or surrounding roads and only from very specific longer distance views. In this context the additional/replacement equipment would be viewed in the setting of the existing, more significant roof top equipment, and the proposals are not considered to result in any material harm to surrounding visual amenity or the setting of the adjacent St Marys Butts/Caste Street Conservation Area.

6.4 The proposal is considered to accord with Policies DM21, CS7, CS33 and RC5.

*Alternative Sites*

6.5 The re-use of existing sites and site sharing by different operators, such as that currently proposed, is in accordance with paragraph 43 of the NPPF and is within the spirit of Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM21 which encourages

the replacement of one structure with another to minimise the visual impact. On this basis, and taking into account the lack of visual harm identified above, it is considered that an alternative site is not required for the proposed development.

- 6.6 The proposal is considered to accord with Policy DM21.

#### *Flooding*

- 6.7 A small part of the rear of the site is located within flood zone 2 and flood zone 3. A flood risk assessment has been submitted as part of the application. This demonstrates that as roof level equipment to an existing building and telecommunications base station the proposals would not result in an increased risk of flooding.

- 6.8 The proposal is considered to accord with Policy CS35.

#### *Equalities impact assessment*

7. In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposal is considered to comply with Policies CS7 and CS33 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015), Policy DM21 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015), Policy RC5 of the Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009) and the National Planning Policy Framework as assessed above. It is therefore recommended that planning permission and listed building consent be granted, subject to conditions.

Drawing no.s:

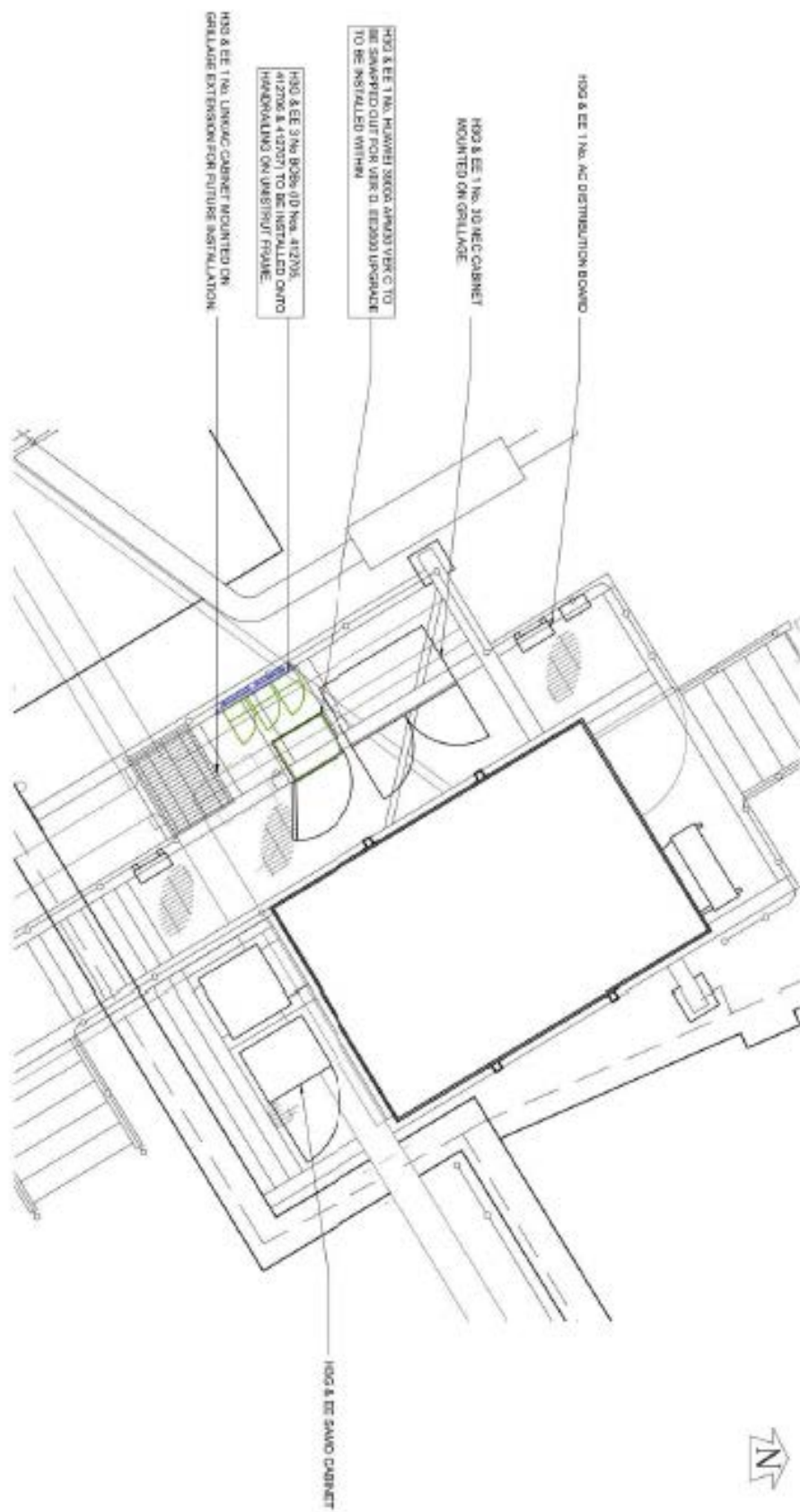
167370-00-004-ML001 rev 1 - Location Plan  
167370-02-100-MD011 rev 11 - Site Plan Proposed  
167370-02-101-MD011 rev 11 - Equipment Plan Proposed  
167370-02-150-MD011 rev 11 - Elevation Proposed (south-east elevation)  
167370-02-155-MD011 rev 11 - Elevation Proposed (north elevation)  
167370-02-155-MD011 rev 11 - Elevation Proposed (north-west elevation)  
167370-02-153-MD011 rev 11 - Elevation Proposed (south-west elevation)  
167370-02-151-MD011 rev 11 - Antenna Schematic Proposed

Case Officer: Matt Burns

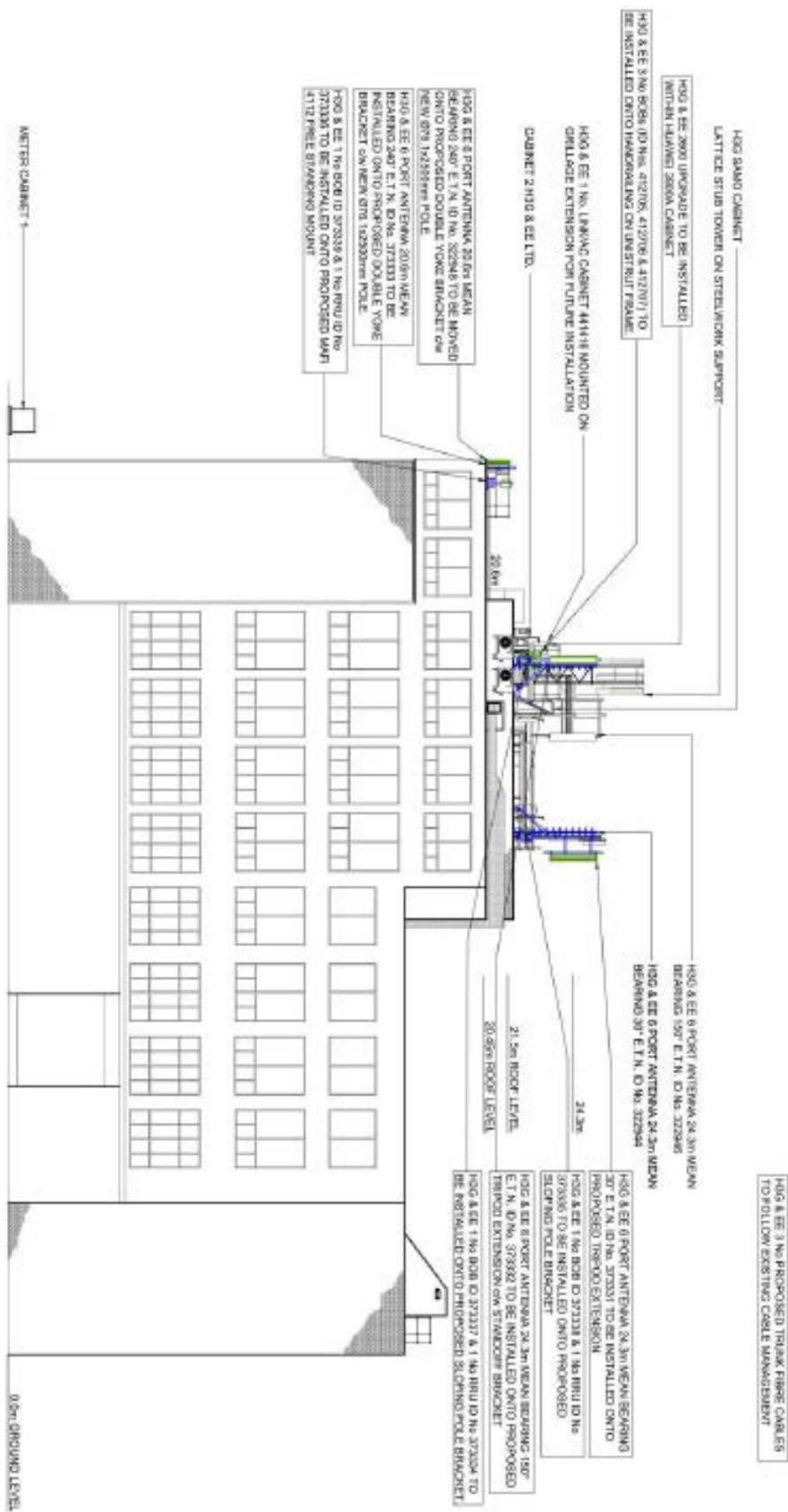




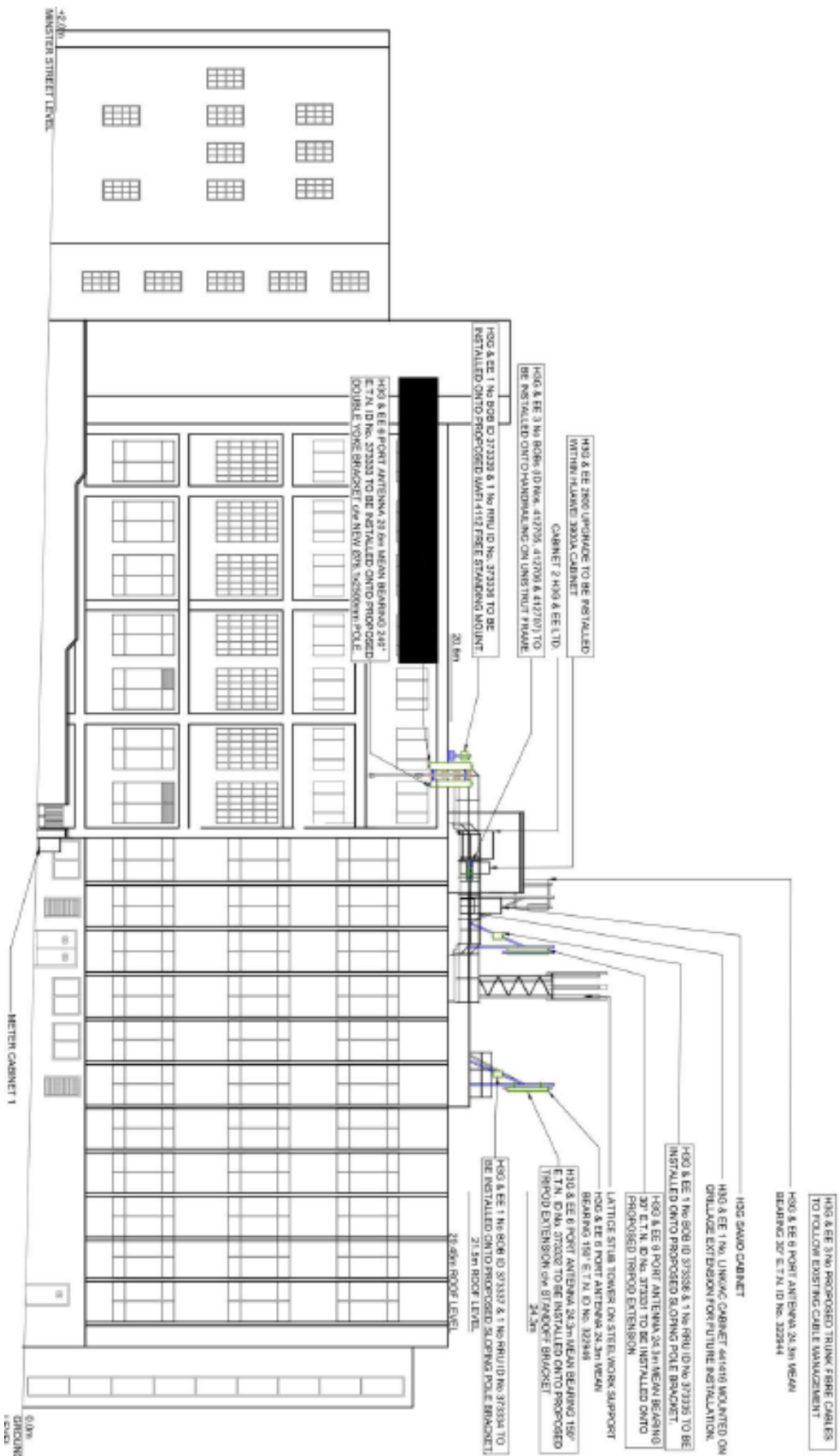




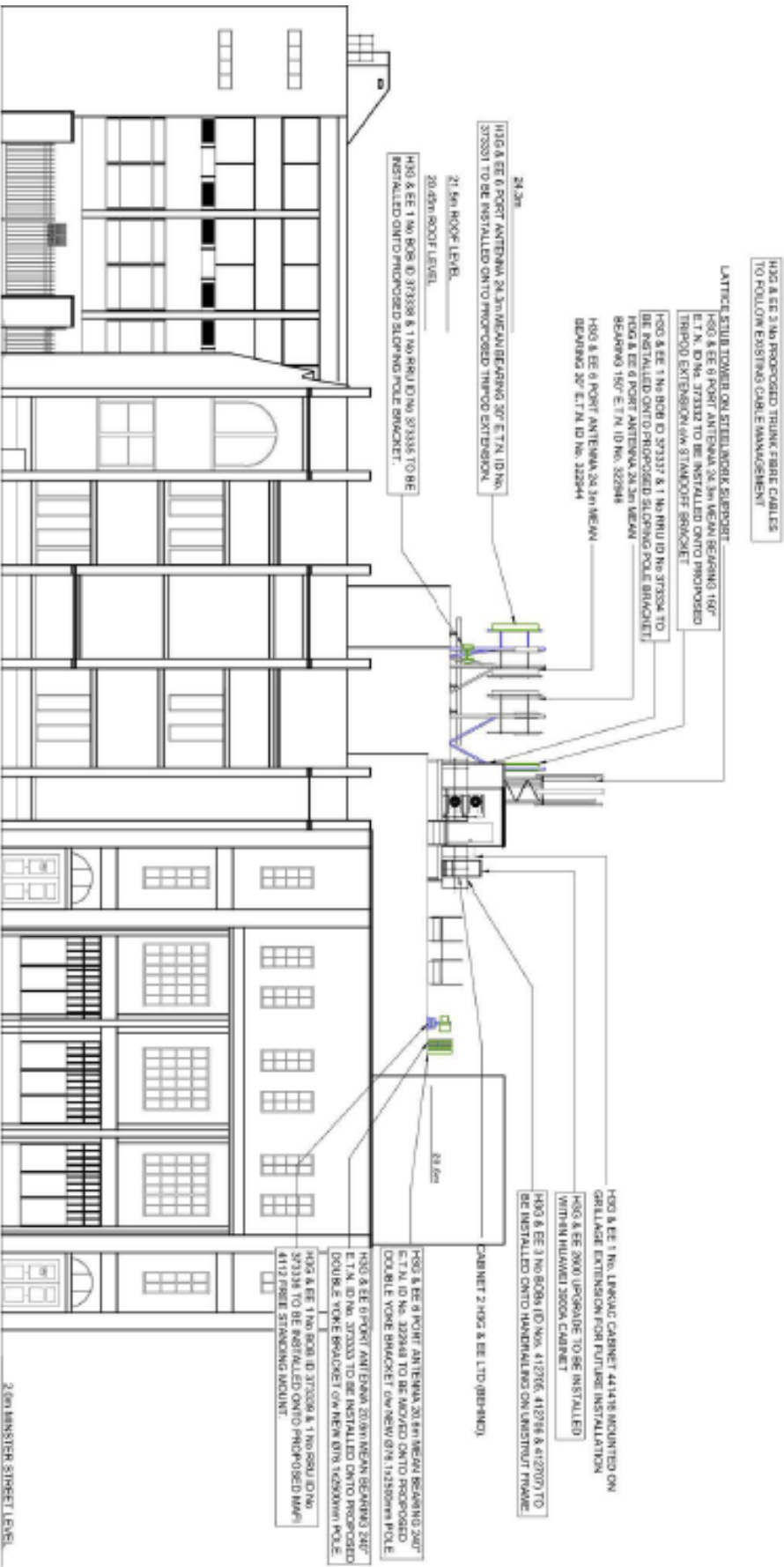
Equipment Cabinets



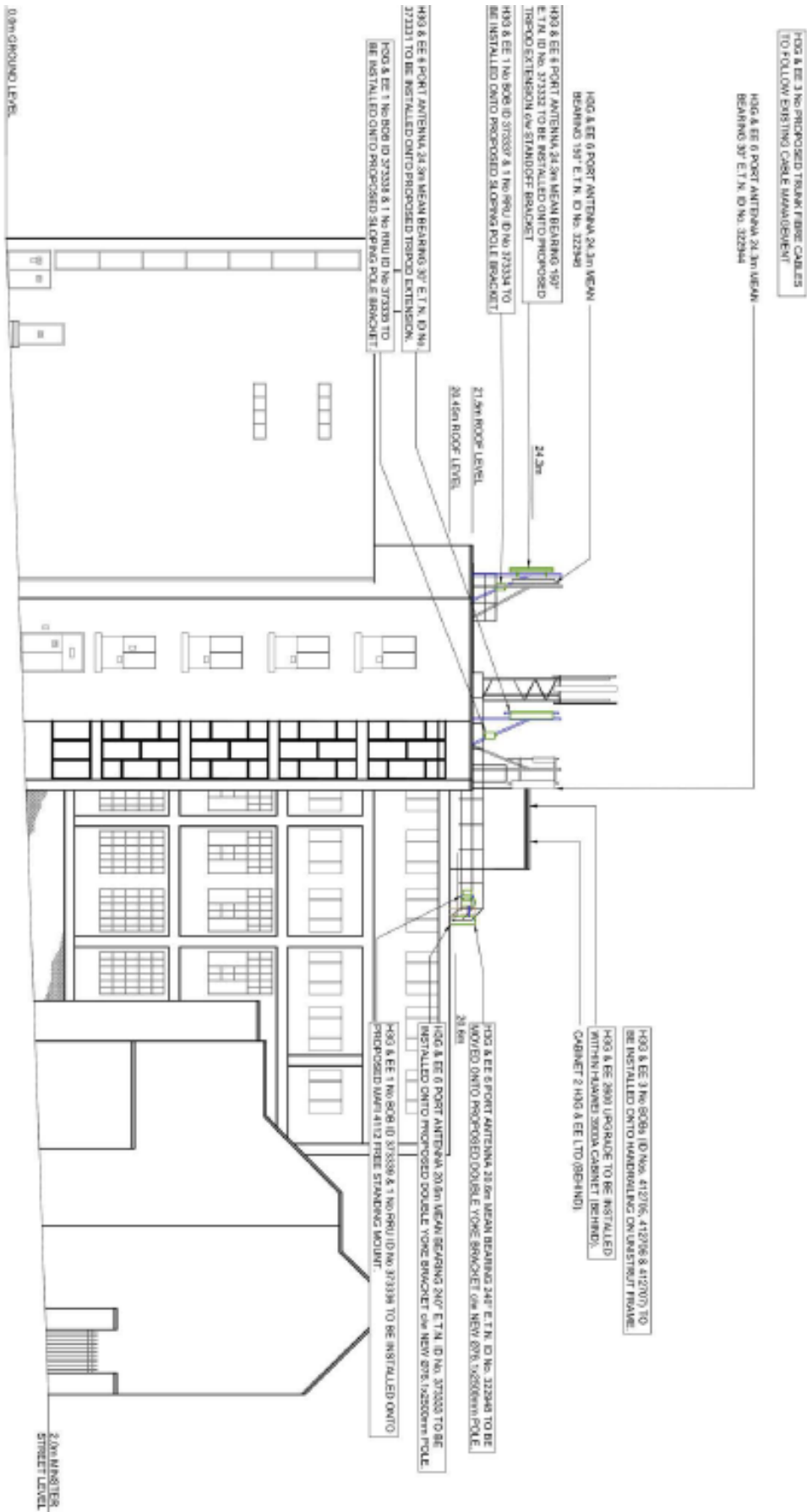
Proposed south-east elevation



Proposed south-west elevation



Proposed north-east elevation



Proposed north-west elevation