

**Section '3' - Applications recommended for PERMISSION, APPROVAL or CONSENT**

**Application No :** 15/03002/FULL1

**Ward:**  
**Shortlands**

**Address :** Land At North East Junction With  
Pickhurst Lane And Mead Way Hayes  
Bromley

**OS Grid Ref:** E: 539457 N: 167379

**Applicant :** H3G UK Limited

**Objections :** YES

**Description of Development:**

Replacement of existing 9.8m telecommunications monopole with 9.7m high monopole with 3. number antennae and wraparound equipment cabinet and additional equipment cabinet.

**Key designations:**

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds  
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area  
London City Airport Safeguarding  
Local Distributor Roads  
Smoke Control SCA 2

**Proposal**

This full application for planning permission proposes the replacement of the existing telecommunications monopole with a new monopole incorporating a wraparound cabinet integral to the monopole base, in addition to the installation of an additional cabinet.

The existing monopole is 9.8m high and has a slimline appearance, being of uniform width for the full height of the mast. The replacement mast would have a less conventional appearance, with a wider base to accommodate the integral cabinet, a vertical section and then a wider element at the top of the mast.

An additional equipment cabinet is proposed to be sited in conjunction with the existing array of cabinets on the verge.

**Location**

The application site lies on the northern side of the junction of Mead Way with Pickhurst Lane and comprises a grassed open area bounded by Mead Way to the south, Pickhurst Lane to the west and to the north by a narrow access road serving residential dwellings set back from the main carriageways and fronting Pickhurst Lane and Mead Way.

The junction is busy and is controlled by traffic lights. The open grassy area currently hosts a 10m high existing T-mobile telecommunications monopole, 3 T-mobile equipment cabinets, 2 electricity cabinets and a memorial bench.

## **Consultations**

A site notice was displayed and local residents notified. A letter of objection was received which raised the following issues:

- The existing monopole is approx. 1m from an ornamental prunus which was planted on the grass verge to enhance the appearance of the corner. If this tree is damaged or removed it should be replaced.
- The additional antennae within the monopole may increase the electro-magnetic emissions to which some people are sensitive.
- Concern regarding the EMF emissions
- The additional equipment cabinet would add to the clutter of cabinets already on the corner. Some planting would make the green space more attractive, particularly since there is a bench already there.

## **Planning Considerations**

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

### BE1 Design of New Development

Of particular relevance to this application is BE1(ii) which states that "Development should not detract from the existing street scene and/or landscape and should respect important views, skylines, landmarks or landscape features."

### BE22 Telecommunications Apparatus

This Policy states that in a development involving telecommunications installation, the developer will be required to demonstrate that there is a need for the development. The equipment should meet the ICNIRP guidelines on the limitation of exposure to electro-magnetic field. The installation shall not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area nor the visual and residential amenities of neighbouring properties and the visual impact of the development should be minimised by the use of screening by trees or other landscaping.

### The National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that "At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking."

Chapter 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework relates to "Supporting High Quality Communications Infrastructure. Paragraph 43 states that local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks while aiming to keep the number of masts and sites for such installations to the minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network. The need for a new site must be justified and where new sites are required the equipment associated with the development "should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate."

It is emphasised that the planning system is not the appropriate arena for the determination of health safeguards so long as the installation would comply with International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

With regard to the importance of good design, the National Planning Policy Framework states at Paragraph 56 that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to make places better for people. Paragraph 60 states that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

#### London Plan 2015

Paragraphs 1.38 - 1.41 of the London Plan relate to the need to ensure the infrastructure to support growth within London, referring to the strategic importance of providing adequate infrastructure, including modern communications networks.

Chapter 4 of the London Plan includes the strategic objective in Policy 4.11 of "encouraging a connected economy." The policy itself states that the Mayor, GLA and all other strategic agencies should facilitate the delivery of an ICT network to ensure suitable and adequate network coverage across London which will include "well designed and located street-based apparatus."

#### **Planning History**

00/00761/TELCOM:10 metre high telecommunication pole with 2 antennae and associated equipment cabin CONSULTATION BY ONE 2 ONE COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING NEED FOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE. RQAPP

00/02462/TELCOM:10 metre high telecommunication pole with single antenna and associated equipment cabin CONSULTATION BY ONE 2 ONE COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING NEED FOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE. RQAPP

01/03339/TELCOM:8 metre high telecommunications tower with antenna and equipment cabinet (CONSULTATION BY ONE 2 ONE REGARDING NEED FOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE) RQAPP

01/03543/TELCOM:10 metre high telecommunications column with equipment cabin CONSULTATION BY BT CELLNET REGARDING NEED FOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE RQAPP

03/04244/TELCOM:12.5m high telecommunications column with antenna and 2 equipment cabinets (CONSULTATION BY 02 UK LTD REGARDING NEED FOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE) RQAPP

06/02518/TELCOM:10m high telecommunications monopole with shrouded antennae and ancillary equipment cabinet

(CONSULTATION BY 02 UK LTD REGARDING NEED FOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE).RQAPP

06/04027/TELCOM:10m high telecommunications monopole with shrouded antennae and ancillary equipment cabinet (CONSULTATION BY 02 UK LTD REGARDING NEED FOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE) RQAPP

15/01994/TELCOM Installation of 12.5m high telecommunications monopole supporting antennae; 4 no. radio equipment cabinets and ancillary development works CONSULTATION BY TELEFONICA UK LTD AND VODAFONE LTD REGARDING THE NEED FOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE . RQAPP

The Inspector's decision in dismissing the appeal against the Council's disapproval of siting and appearance of a 12.5m high telecommunications column with antenna and 2 equipment cabinets (ref. 03.04244) is a material consideration in the assessment of the proposal.

The Inspector considered that there were 2 main issues, the first relating to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the locality and on residential amenities, having regard to the technical need for the development and possible alternative sites. The second matter was the implications of the proposal for the health of persons in the vicinity.

The Inspector noted that the mast would be prominently visible from all directions around the junction itself, although longer views would be more limited from Pickhurst Lane to the north. The Inspector accepted that the street lights at the junction would prevent the mast from being an isolated vertical feature and that its lower parts would often be seen against the background of houses, trees and shrubs. Nevertheless, the Inspector felt that there were some important negative factors which would result in a significant adverse impact on the busy junction and the suburban residential environment:

- the mast would not only be thicker, but also markedly taller than the adjacent street light in the grass verge. While lighting columns in Pickhurst Lane appeared to be somewhat taller than the proposed mast, the Inspector considered that the mast would project so far above the adjacent column and others at the junction that it would stand out as an incongruous feature;

- the Inspector noted that an appeal proposal for a One2One 8m street works mast on the same grass verge had been allowed, and saw no evidence to suggest that the mast would not be erected. He considered that the mast proposed, at 12.5m high, would be substantially taller and would add another item of that type of street furniture at close quarters and near the street light. The Inspector considered that site sharing would result in an obviously uncoordinated array of columns of different heights and/or designs. Colouring the mast would do little to reduce the impact. When considering an appeal by 02 relating to a 10m high mast on much the same site, another Inspector concluded in 2003 that the mast would not appear obtrusive in the overall collection of vertical elements of street furniture. As the

mast then proposed would have been 2.5m taller the Inspector reached a different conclusion;

- the two existing cabinets were already substantial in size. The two further cabinets associated with the approved One2One installation would be side-by-side, but close to the existing ones, and these would be in addition to the two cabinets proposed in association with the 12.5m high monopole the subject of the appeal. The Inspector considered that the overall group of cabinets in the grassy and open focal point would appear cluttered, unsightly and poorly co-ordinated. The Inspector considered that the combined effects of the permitted and proposed masts, the existing and proposed cabinets and existing street furniture would significantly harm the character and appearance of the locality.

With regards to the impact on residential amenity, the Inspector did not consider that the mast or cabinets would cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of nearby residential property in terms of an overbearing of oppressive visual impact. That said, residents able to see the mast from their dwellings would be aware of the harm to the wider locality.

The Inspector accepted that 'perceived health fears' were a factor to be taken into account despite the lack of objective evidence to support them. On balance, the Inspector believed that perceived fears and anxiety did not justify the dismissal of the appeal. However, taking into account the need for the mast and consideration given to alternative sites, the Inspector concluded that the degree of visual harm would be sufficient to outweigh the need for and benefits of the proposal.

Under reference 15/01994 the siting and appearance of a 12.5m monopole and 4 radio equipment cabinets was disapproved on the grounds:

"The proposed monopole and equipment cabinets, by reason of their height, design, prominent siting and discordant appearance, would result in an unacceptable and undesirable proliferation of clutter on the open verge, seriously detrimental to the visual amenities of the street scene and the area in general and contrary to Policies BE1 and BE22 of the Unitary Development Plan."

### **Conclusions**

The main issue in the determination of this application is the impact that the proposal would have on the character of the area and the visual amenities of the street scene.

The proposed mast would replace an existing mast of a similar height. While the proposed monopole would have a slightly more bulky appearance at the top and bottom it is considered that the appearance of the mast would not be so alien as to warrant the refusal of planning permission in this instance. The profile of the mast at its wider base would not be dissimilar to the profile of a street light, with a wider girth at the base. The top of the mast would be significantly wider than the existing mast, but would balance the width of the base and as such the design and appearance of the mast may be considered on balance to be acceptable.

The proposal would incorporate the installation of an additional equipment cabinet on what is already a rather congested verge. The proliferation of clutter was considered unacceptable in the most recent application, although that application related to an additional 12.5m high mast and the installation of 4 equipment cabinets rather than the replacement of an existing mast and installation of 1 extra equipment cabinet in this case. The impact of the proposal in terms of proliferation has been limited by the incorporation of 1 cabinet at the base of the mast itself.

On balance, the replacement of the existing mast and the installation of 1 additional equipment cabinet would not have a seriously detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the area. The development of the electronic communications systems and networks is supported by local, regional and national planning policies and guidance, and the benefit of the replacement mast in terms of upgrading the local telecommunications infrastructure is considered to outweigh the limited impact of the proposal on the visual amenities of the street scene.

It is acknowledged that the existing mast is sited close to a prunus which screens the base reasonably effectively, and that the increased width of the mast at its base would bring the proposed mast approx. 0.15m closer to this shrub. Given the prominence of the site it is therefore considered appropriate that any permission should be subject to a condition to secure the long term health or replacement of the prunus should it be damaged as a consequence of the telecommunications development.

**RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION: Subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years, beginning with the date of this decision notice.**

**Reason: Section 91, Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

- 2 Any telecommunications equipment hereby permitted which subsequently becomes redundant shall be removed from the site within a period of 2 months and the land shall be reinstated to its former condition.**

**Reason: In order to comply with Policies BE22 and BE23 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of the visual amenities of the area.**

- 3 The siting and appearance of the monopole and cabinet shall be carried out in complete accordance with the submitted drawing(s) unless previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

**Reason: In order to comply with Policies BE22 and BE23 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of the visual amenities of the area.**

- 4 No trees or shrubs shall be felled, lopped, topped or pruned before or during the installation of the telecommunications apparatus hereby permitted without the prior agreement in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or shrubs removed or which die through lopping, topping or pruning shall be replaced in the next planting season with trees or shrubs of such size and species as may be agreed with the Authority.**

**Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE22 of the Unitary Development Plan and to ensure that the visual impact of the development can be minimised by the use of screening by trees or other landscaping.**

- 5 Details of a landscaping scheme to screen the proposed equipment cabinet shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted. The landscaping details shall be implemented in the first planting season following the first use of the telecommunications installation or the substantial completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species to those originally planted.**

**Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE22 and in the interest of the visual amenities of the area.**