

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

Application No : 15/05456/TELCOM

Ward:
Farnborough And Crofton

Address : Land Outside 192 Crofton Road
Orpington

OS Grid Ref: E: 543961 N: 165757

Applicant : Telefonica Ltd And Vodaphone Ltd

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Installation of 10m high telecommunications mast and associated cabinet at ground level

CONSULTATION BY CORNERSTONE TELECOMMUNICATIONS LIMITED (CTIL) REGARDING THE NEED FOR PRIOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
London City Airport Safeguarding
Smoke Control SCA 11

Proposal

This application seeks prior approval for the erection of a 10m high telecommunications mast adjacent to the footway on Crofton Road close to the junction with Poplar Avenue, along with a 1.7m high cabinet at ground level. The mast would be in the style of a replica telegraph pole.

The applicant has submitted supporting information including a technical justification for the proposal, stating that the site is required to provide enhanced coverage for Vodafone and Telefonica to improve the site coverage in the BR6 area. The constraints of the cell radius of 250m means that it would not be feasible to site the column outside of the locale.

Location

The mast and cabinet would be situated at the north-eastern end of a large area of mainly open grass verge, approximately 30m away from the junction of Crofton Road and Poplar Avenue, and would be set back approximately 2.5m from the footway on Crofton Road. They would lie adjacent to an area of trees and bushes to the north-east which extends along Crofton Road.

Consultations

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received which can be summarised as follows:

- * area of grassed verge would have an industrial appearance
- * proposals would further restrict public use of the land
- * health impacts
- * damage to the environment
- * loss of outlook from nearby residents
- * loss of trees, shrubs and undergrowth
- * alternative sites should be considered
- * proposals could still affect the sightline from Poplar Avenue
- * mast could interfere with transmissions from planes flying overhead into Biggin Hill airport.

Comments from Consultees

The Council's Highway Engineer raises no objections to the proposals as the position of the mast and cabinet would not obstruct the sightline from Poplar Avenue.

Environmental Health raises no technical objections to the proposals.

Planning Considerations

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

BE1 Design of New Development
BE22 Telecommunications Apparatus
T18 Road Safety

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF 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 NPPF 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 emphasises 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 NPPF 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.

Planning History

Permission was granted in 2006 and 2007 (refs.05/03645 and 07/01380) for a control kiosk, a vent column and hardstanding in connection with a foul sewage storage tank and pumping station on this area of land, as part of a flood alleviation scheme.

Prior approval was refused in June 2015 (ref.15/01898) for the installation of a 12.5m high telecommunications mast and 4 cabinets on land outside 194 Crofton Road on the following grounds:

- 1 The proposed telecommunications equipment would be located within the sightline from Poplar Avenue which would be detrimental to conditions of safety in the highway, and contrary to Policy T18 of the Unitary Development Plan.
- 2 Due to their height, design and siting within this prominent open area, the proposed mast and cabinets would appear obtrusive and prominent within the street scene, and would be detrimental to the visual and residential amenities of the surrounding area, thereby contrary to Policy BE22 of the Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character and visual amenities of the area, on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties, and on highway safety.

Local objections have been received concerning the potential health risks associated with the installation of the proposal. However, documentation has been provided to confirm compliance with the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and as such these concerns cannot be considered in the determination of this application.

The proposed mast would involve the sharing of infrastructure between two telecommunications operators, and the revised scheme has reduced the height of the mast from 12.5m to 10m, and now includes only one ground level cabinet rather than four. The mast and cabinet have been moved further away from the junction with Poplar Avenue, and would be set 2m further back from the footway along Crofton Road. They would be partially screened by existing trees, and would now be in a much less prominent position than the previous mast and cabinets. Therefore, the proposals are not now considered to be overly prominent or obtrusive within the street scene, and would not be significantly harmful to the

visual amenities of the area nor the outlook from neighbouring residential properties.

The Council's Highway Engineer has confirmed that the revised position of the mast and cabinet means that the sightline from Poplar Avenue to the left hand side would not now be obstructed, and the proposals would not therefore have a detrimental impact on road safety.

In light of the above, it is considered that prior approval would be required for this telecommunications development, and in view of the absence of harm that would be caused to the visual amenities of the area, to the amenities of nearby residential properties, and to road safety, the siting and appearance proposed should be approved.

RECOMMENDATION: PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED AND GRANTED

- 1 The siting and appearance of the telecommunications mast 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.

- 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.