

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

Application No : 15/05647/TELCOM

Ward:
**Mottingham And Chislehurst
North**

Address : Land Opposite 1 Grove Park Road
Mottingham London

OS Grid Ref: E: 541953 N: 172925

Applicant : Telefonica UK Ltd And Vodafone Ltd **Objections :** YES

Description of Development:

Installation of 12.5m high telecommunications mast. Consultation by Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Ltd (CTIL) regarding the need for prior approval of siting and appearance

Key designations:

Smoke Control SCA 51

Proposal

This application seeks prior approval for the erection of a 12.5m high telecommunications mast on the northern side of Grove Park Road close to the roundabout junction with Mottingham Lane, College View, Mottingham Road and Court Farm Road. The mast would be situated at the edge of the kerb adjacent to Eltham College, and would lie close to other street furniture including a post box, a cabinet and a 10m high lamppost.

The application originally submitted included a ground level cabinet which was to be located adjacent to the existing cabinet, but this has been removed from the application due to highways concerns about visibility at the junction, and the agent considers that it would not in any case require planning permission nor prior approval. The position of the mast has also been moved from the back edge of the footway to the edge of the kerbline.

The applicant has submitted supporting information including a technical justification for the proposal, stating that the mast is required in order to provide enhanced 2G, 3G and 4G coverage for Vodafone and Telefonica within the SE9 area. It is stated that the replica telegraph pole style of mast has been chosen in order to allow the mast to merge with the numerous vertical elements of street furniture close by, including 10m high street lighting columns.

The applicant has also provided an ICNIRP declaration which certifies that the site is designed to be in full compliance with the requirements of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation for public exposure.

Location

The application site lies opposite residential dwellings in Grove Park Road, Mottingham Road and College View, and borders the grounds of Eltham College to the north. There are a number of mature trees and an electricity substation close by within the grounds of Eltham College, and 10m high lampposts are located along Grove Park Road. An existing post box and cabinet are also located close by.

Consultations

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

- * the mast would reduce further the limited visibility at the junction of Mottingham Lane and Grove Park Road
- * the mast would detract from the street scene
- * the appearance of the mast would be out of character with the area
- * the mast is too high and of an industrial appearance
- * loss of outlook from neighbouring residential properties
- * health hazard
- * a more discreet mast could instead be located on the existing tower at Eltham College which already hosts two discreet antennae.

Comments from Consultees

The Council's Highway Officer originally raised objections to the location of the proposed ground level cabinet as it would essentially fill in the gap between the existing pillar box and cabinet, and would therefore unacceptably reduce visibility at this junction. However, the cabinet has now been removed from the application, and the Highway Officer has advised that the mast on its own, and in its revised position, would not be significantly detrimental to visibility at the junction. On that basis, no highways objections are raised to the proposals.

No objections are raised to the proposals from an Environmental Health point of view.

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 installations, 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.

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. 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."

Conclusions

The main issues in this case are the impact of the proposals on the character and visual amenities of the area, on the amenities of nearby residents, and on road 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 12.5m high mast would be situated close to mature trees with a height of approximately 16m, and although it would be visible from dwellings in adjacent roads, it would be seen against a backdrop of tall mature trees and other street installations such as nearby lampposts, a post box and a cabinet.

The proposed mast would involve the sharing of infrastructure between two telecommunications operators, and the proposed installation is not 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.

Furthermore, the proposed mast is not considered to have a detrimental impact on road safety.

With regard to the offer made by Eltham College to enter into discussions about an alternative siting for telecommunications apparatus, the applicant has confirmed that the use of the rooftop of the tower at the College had been considered as part of the assessment for alternative sites, but it was found that an existing operator has utilised the only space available for a scheme of this nature, and had effectively sterilised the building from the perspective of adding additional telecoms operators.

In light of the above, it is considered that prior approval would be required for this telecommunications mast, 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 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.