

Section '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 15/05646/TELCOM

Ward:
Cray Valley East

Address : Land Opposite 27-33 Chelsfield Road
Orpington

OS Grid Ref: E: 547322 N: 167128

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

Description of Development:

Installation of 10m telecommunications mast and one ancillary equipment cabinet. Consultation by Vodafone and O2 regarding the need for prior approval for siting and appearance

Key designations:

Areas of Archaeological Significance
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
London City Airport Safeguarding
Local Distributor Roads
Smoke Control SCA 26

Proposal

This application seeks prior approval for replacement telecommunications installation upgrade and associated works. This will involve the installation of a 10 metre high Jupiter T-Range Replica Telegraph Pole on a new root foundation and 1 no. new cabinet at ground level. The telecommunications infrastructure will provide new coverage and capacity for both Vodafone and O2.

Location

The site is located on the grassed verge adjacent to the tarmac footpath on the southern side of Chelsfield Road on the corner with Northfield Avenue.

Consultations

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

- The proposed mast will be an eyesore
- The open fields would have been a better solution
- House values will be reduced
- Health concerns
- Already have enough street furniture within the street
- Any more street furniture on the green would be out of proportion

- It is important to keep small green areas, they give character, impression, atmosphere and feel to this and other residential areas.

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
T6 Pedestrians

The National Planning Policy Framework, in particular Section 5: Supporting high quality communication infrastructure.

Planning History

15/01911/TELCOM - Proposed replacement telecommunications installation upgrade and associated works - CONSULTATION BY CTIL, TELEFONICA UK LTD AND VODAFONE LTD REGARDING THE NEED FOR PRIOR APPROVAL OF SITING AND APPEARANCE - Refused

Conclusions

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

The application site was visited by the case officer and the aims and objectives of the above policies, national and regional planning guidance, all other material planning considerations including any objections, other representations and relevant planning history on the site were taken into account in the assessment of the proposal.

The application follows a previously refused application. The reasons for refusal are as follows:

- Due to their height, siting and design, the proposed mast and ancillary equipment would be obtrusive and highly prominent features in the street scene, out of character and detrimental to the visual and residential amenities of the surrounding area and contrary to Policy BE22 of the Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework;
- Due to the size and position of the equipment cabinets, the proposal is likely to give rise to an unacceptable impact upon the free passage of pedestrians using the footpath, contrary to Policy T6 of the Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The application has been amended in the following ways -

- Removal of 3no. equipment cabinets
- Reduction in height of telecommunications pole from 12.5m to 10m
- Telecommunication pole moved back from the footpath by 600mm
- The equipment cabinet box, when open, overhangs the pavement by less than 100mm (considerably reduced from the previous application)

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 development would not utilise any of the existing equipment in the vicinity of the site, providing additional street furniture in the area however the size and scale of the additional equipment has been significantly reduced from the previously submitted application and now only proposes to host a single equipment cabinet and a 10m high monopole.

The proposal is situated in a prominent and open corner junction and would be immediately visible to the area; the open space contributes substantially to the character of the area and provides considerable visual and amenity value. The proposed pole has been reduced in height from that as previously refused and is considered to overcome the previous concerns relating to its height and appearance, especially when considered with the reduced amount of ancillary equipment boxes which also mitigates the sprawl of development within the site. Whilst visible within the wider street scene, it is not considered that the development represents an erosion of the valuable open space at this location given the scaling down of the amount of proposed development and the reduction in footprint on the site.

The proposed equipment box is no longer considered to obstruct the free passage of pedestrians when work is being carried out as the doors of the cabinet are no longer likely to cause a blockage of the pavement when in use due to being set further back from the pavement by approximately 600mm.

In light of the above, Members may agree that prior approval would be required for this telecommunications development, and in light of the amendments made to the application, the development is no longer considered to impact detrimentally upon the visual amenities of the area including nearby residential properties. The siting and appearance of the development is considered acceptable and prior approval should be granted for the telecommunications apparatus.

RECOMMENDATION: PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED AND GRANTED

- 1 The siting and appearance of the telecommunications mast and equipment cabinets 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 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 Policy of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of the visual amenities of the area.

- 3 Before the operation of the development hereby approved the equipment cabinet shall be painted in a colour and finish to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the facility shall be retained in that colour and finish and kept free of graffiti.**

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