

# Officer's Report

<b>Application Number</b>	<b>HGY/2023/0825</b>
<b>Type</b>	<b>Prior notification: Development by telecoms operators</b>
<b>Location</b>	Hornsey Cricket Club, Tivoli Road, London N8 8RG
<b>Proposal</b>	The installation of a 20m high monopole supporting 6no. antennas and 2no. 300mm dishes along with 2no. ground based equipment cabinets and development ancillary thereto, (Prior Notification-Development by telecoms operators)
<b>Case Officer</b>	Kwaku Bossman-Gyamera
<b>Valid Date</b>	24/03/2023
<b>Applicant</b>	.
<b>Agent</b>	Fiona Kadama

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Refuse**

REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

#### **1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

PRIOR APPROVAL IS REQUIRED AND REFUSED

#### **2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS**

##### Proposed Development

2.1 This is a prior notification application for the installation of a monopole mast with antennae and for the installation of two ancillary cabinets. The overall height of the mast with antennae/apertures would be 20m high and is akin to the provision of extra cabinets at the base level. The monopole would be a steel structure and headframe with a grey finish. The antennae/apertures would be made of composite materials and electrical components.

2.2 The cabinets would be constructed of steel and would have a green finish. They would contain doors which would open towards onto the green space and would be set upon a new concrete base.

2.3 The application has been called in by Councillor if the Local Planning Authority is minded granting permission.

##### Site and Surroundings

2.4 The proposed site is located at Hornsey Cricket Club which is situated to the north of Glasslyn Road and to the northeast of Tivoli Road. The application site is an area of grass on the eastern border of the playing field, located to the north of the tennis courts and adjacent the Park Road outdoor swimming pool. The site is positioned adjacent a row of trees bordering the cricket ground and adjacent leisure centre. The application site is surrounded by mixture of residential properties, and community facilities and open space.

2.5 The application site is not located Conservation Area. It does not fall within the curtilage of a listed building.

Relevant Planning and Enforcement history

2.6 There is no relevant recent planning history in relation to the site.

### **3. CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

3.1 The responses below were received following consultation on the application:

Internal:

1) LBH Transportation Team: no comment.

### **4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS**

5.1 The application has been publicised by way of 1 site notice displayed in the vicinity of the site and 130 letters. The number of representations received from neighbours, local groups, in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 51

Objecting: 51

Supporting: 0

5.2 The following local groups/societies made representations:

- On behalf of the Glasslyn, Montenotte & Tivoli Residents Association (GMTRA) objects to the proposal on the following grounds:
  - (1) The proposed location is Metropolitan Open Land. This is protected land, equivalent to green belt, where a development such as this is not permitted.
  - (2) Furthermore, the location is a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) Grade1, recognised as being of importance to wildlife and biodiversity. It is an area where bats are active. The Bat Conservation Trust recommends that masts are erected as far away from bat roosting locations and flight paths as possible. This particular location is therefore wholly inappropriate, and erection of a telecoms mast is not permitted.
  - (3) The mast will be located in an area of open space and therefore highly visible and intrusive. Although just outside a conservation area, it will be visible from many points within the conservation area. Furthermore, it will tower over the adjacent public open-air swimming pool, which may deter some people from coming to the pool.
  - (4) The landowner (Hornsey Club) has not given permission for this development on its land and opposes the application. There is no public right of way to the proposed site, so any visits for maintenance purposes will require trespassing on private land.
  - (5) The Hornsey Club cricket field has been used as a landing site for air ambulance helicopters, as most recently as August 2022 in response to an emergency at the park Road swimming pool. Clearly a mast in this location would be a dangerous hazard in this regard.
  - (6) The coverage map provided shows that the telecom signal in this area is already satisfactory. We are not aware of any residents complaining about a poor signal. The apparent gains would be mostly over uninhabited land.
  
- The Shepherds Cot Trust object to the erection of a Mast as proposed in the location of Hornsey Cricket Club. As with Shepherds Cot Trust land this is Metropolitan Open Land and an area regarded by the community as valuable open land primarily for the enjoyment of sporting activity. The proposed Mast would be unsightly and completely inappropriate in a sporting environment. We

support the objections of Hornsey Cricket Club and the immediate community whose objections we endorse.

• Hornsey Cricket Club objects to the proposal on the following grounds:

(1) The proposed mast is situated on land owned and used by the cricket club. The club is a long-established community facility which runs adult and junior cricket teams and coaching. The club provides a vital green space for play, recreation and sports, thereby contributing to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the local community it serves. By providing this space for sports within a densely populated urban area the club plays an important role in unlocking the advantages of sport and physical activity for the local community.

(2) Contrary to the applicant's assertions, the proposal would prejudice the use of the cricket playing area. The proposal would result in the permanent loss of part of the playing field, which is used for cricket matches and coaching, including the popular junior coaching sessions which are attended by approximately 150 children each week and require the full area of the playing field to be used. The proposed site is adjacent to the club's practice net facility and is one of the most heavily used parts of the ground. The loss of part of this land and the obtrusive and overbearing presence of the monopole will make the club generally less attractive to new members and discourage people from using the practice facilities resulting in a reduction in participation in sports activity by the local community.

(3) In addition, the proposal is on an area of land that is used by emergency vehicles. It is important vehicles such as ambulances have access to the club and the nursery.

(4) The NPPF states that existing open space, sport and recreation facilities should not be built on unless clearly surplus to requirements, or where the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, or where the need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss. Haringey's Open Space and Biodiversity Study (2013) shows that there is a significant quantitative shortfall in accessible open space to meet the needs of the Borough's population, and for this reason Policy SP13 establishes a presumption against any net loss of open space.

(5) The land is designated as MOL. The London Plan recognises that MOL improves Londoners' quality of life by providing localities which offer sporting and leisure use, and associated health benefits.

(6) The siting and appearance of this proposal is not acceptable due to the prejudice it would cause to the use of the sports field and the adverse impact it would have on the visual amenity of the site. The applicant's submission understates the impact on the use of the cricket field and provides no support for the assertion that the proposal would "not impede the use of the cricket ground."

5.3 The following Councillor(s) made representations:

• Cllr Luke Cawley – Harrison objects to this proposal on the grounds that it would be development on Metropolitan Open Land, would cause negative harm on the Crouch End Conservation Area which the application sits on the border of, and would impact protected sight lines from Alexandra Palace.

5.4 The following issues were raised in representations that are material to the determination of the application and are summarised and addressed in the next section of this report:

#### Objections

- There is no justification for the creation of a structure/installation of such magnitude at this location.
- It is next to where children play cricket and tennis so presents a potential health hazard.

- There are views over the Cricket Ground to Alexandra Palace which would be obscured by the proposed installation.
- Any mast of that height will presumably need some form of lighting at least on top which would add light nuisance and pollution at night.
- The area of the proposed installation is prone to flooding in heavy rain and tends to remain waterlogged for several days at a time.
- Impact on the current use of the cricket ground. There are views over the Cricket Ground to Alexandra Palace which would be obscured by the proposed installation.
- Impact on the open space/Metropolitan Open Land - The mast would detract from the appearance of the open space and the wider environment.
- The proposed mast would be out of character with the area and would be an overbearing eyesore particularly for those living nearby. In my view it is important to preserve and protect any natural green space in such a built-up area.
- Impact on the nearby conservation area and inappropriate location.
- More appropriate alternative sites should be considered.
- The area is totally unsuitable for such an installation. It is a green piece of land which has been undisturbed for many years and should remain this way. The ecosystem that has developed is fragile and is bounded by two very busy roads. Digging it up and placing poles and wrap-around cabinets etc. etc. on our green patch
- The visual effect of these masts being everywhere - and they will be everywhere if we set the precedent of approving this one in this location would affect my enjoyment of the open green spaces in my local area, on which I depend for my wellbeing.
- Impact on the sports field and neighbouring outdoor swimming pool.
- Why other base stations in the area cannot be shared rather than build a new one. Impact on the visual amenity of nearby residential properties
- The proposal would present an unacceptable risk for emergency helicopters /Air ambulance responding to emergencies at the adjacent swimming pool and cricket ground.

5.5 The following issues raised are not material planning considerations:

- Health implication (Officer Comment:) The application was accompanied by the required ICNIRP Certificate, which satisfied the requirements as laid down by the NPPF. Health considerations and public concern, including perceived fear of health risks can in principle be considerations in determining applications for planning permission. However, it is for the decision maker (generally the local planning authority) to determine the weight to be afforded to such considerations in any particular case. In the Government's view, if the development meets the ICNIRP guideline for public exposure, it should not be necessary for a local planning authority, in processing planning application, to further consider health aspects and concerns. The applicant, in this case, has confirmed that the proposed installation would comply with the relevant ICNIRP guidelines, and a Certificate has been provided to this effect.

## 6. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Principle of development

6.1 The proposal is permitted development under Class A, Part 16 of the General Permitted Development Order (as amended) and does not therefore require planning permission.

6.2 The 56-day notification procedure requires the Local Planning Authority to determine (a) whether prior approval of the siting and appearance of the proposed development is required and, if so, (b) to notify the applicant giving or refusing such approval. Therefore, the principal issues in this case are considered to be:

- 1) Whether prior approval of siting and appearance is required; and, if so
- 2) Whether the details of the siting and appearance are acceptable, having regards to the relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) relate to the installation of telecommunications equipment.

6.3 Within the general policy framework of facilitating the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems, Paragraphs 113 of NPPF advises that the use of existing masts, buildings and other structure for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required for installation – the need for a new site should be justified and equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

### Siting and appearance

6.4 In relation to Telecommunications Equipment Policy DM3(d) sets out that proposals for the installation of telecommunications equipment will be permitted where:

- a. It is demonstrated the equipment is limited to the minimum operational equipment, which should include any future-proofing requirements to accommodate anticipated improvements in infrastructure;
- b. Opportunities for sharing facilities, such as masts, cabinet boxes and satellite dishes, and erecting antennae on existing buildings or other structures has been fully explored and taken advantage of;
- c. There is no significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of neighbouring occupiers;
- d. There is no adverse effect on the external appearance of the building, street scene, or spaces in which they are located;
- e. The size of any equipment visible from the street is minimised (including satellite dishes, other domestic equipment and any supporting structures);
- f. They are located discretely and do not detract from the special character and appearance of heritage assets or conservation area (see Policy DM9);
- g. They are appropriately designed, coloured and landscaped. For dishes, this may include installing a mesh or transparent structure;
- h. A minimum residual footway width on main pedestrian roads is preserved, in line with the Manual for Streets.”

6.5 The applicant has set out in their supporting statement that full consideration has been given to alternative sites and other existing masts in the vicinity. However, the proposed location and design are considered to provide the optimum solution in this instance, the new sites will enhance the coverage of the 5G technologies providing enhanced coverage to the public. Other factors that have influenced the site selection process include the topography of the area for example a site on a hill would not be able to effectively provide coverage to an area in a dip. The aim of site identification is to find the most technically efficient site, which has the minimum impact on visual amenity and the environment.

6.6 Proposal located on a grass verge behind the tennis court at the edge of the cricket grounds. The area is predominantly residential, comprised primarily of two and three storey buildings. Due to the grass verge and trees, the area has an open, spacious and verdant character. The verges and trees therefore contribute positively to the character of the area. The installation of 20m high mast with associated ancillary equipment, including ground level cabinets. While The Local Planning Authority appreciate the proposed mast must be taller than other objects in the vicinity in order to operate efficiently, the large size and utilitarian appearance of the proposed equipment would appear out of scale and overly prominent within its immediate residential setting.

6.7 The site is located on small green verge within a large open space. This is well used community space. The proposal in this case would be located adjacent to an area of open space. The proposed siting of the mast against the open back drop and green edge of the park means that it would appear unduly prominent on the skyline, affecting views into and out of the park and harming its historic setting.

6.8 The trees on the verge would offer some screening and natural backdrop and would be coloured green in an attempt to camouflage the mast where possible. However, this would likely depend on the time of year and would not sufficiently reduce the visual impact of the mast given its size.

6.9 The mast would be clearly seen against the skyline and would represent an intrusive and unduly prominent feature. With such a setting, it is considered that the mast would appear unsympathetic and intrusive to character of the area, notwithstanding its relatively slim appearance. The proposed mast would have a height of 20 metres and would be clearly visible amongst and above nearby trees. It would appear particularly stark in winter when the nearby deciduous trees are bare of leaves. As such it would appear unduly prominent and out of place in this location.

6.10 From many viewpoints the backdrop of trees would not mitigate the impact of the monopole, and from some viewpoints would not mask all upper portion of the structure. It would rise above the height of the trees in views from all angles and approach looking towards the site from all the surrounding roads. From these directions, the mast would stand out as a visible or discordant feature. The proposal would result as an isolated and uncharacteristically high feature that fails to blend into the landscape or street scene.

6.11 The proposed mast would appear considerably higher than existing lampposts and would appear as a utilitarian and incongruous feature within the open space. The proposed siting and design of the cabinets, which would expand the area, over which they are placed, is considered to add undue clutter to the street and harm the visual character of the area.

6.12 Overall, it is considered that the proposed installation would have an unacceptable visual impact on the street scene. Its excessive height, bulk and design in this location would be clearly visible and the mast would appear as an incongruous addition within the surrounding area.

Alternative, site should be thoroughly investigated before a street works installation of this scale proposed in this location can be considered.

6.13 The height of the mast at 15m would still makes it readily visible and overbearing from front garden areas of the surrounding properties ground and also from within primary front windows of such properties. This provides for visual intrusiveness since, the proposed mast and its appendages are most dominant and disharmonious focal point for distraction from the residential properties contrary to the thrust of the council's adopted policy DM3 of the Development Management DPD.

6.14 Whilst the operational need for the mast is noted, this need is considered to be outweighed by the visual harm of the mast particularly when alternative options and mast sharing have not been considered. The application has outlined alternative sites that were considered but discounted for a variety of reasons. While Local Planning Authority (LPA) have some background on these sites, there is little substantive information in this regard. This is especially pertinent as to whether alternative locations would be as prominent or harmful. There are several blocks of flats and nearby buildings within the vicinity of the site where these installations can easily be accommodated. The Framework states that applications for electronic communications development should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. In this case, such evidence is lacking as it pertains to alternative sites.

6.15 Whilst the benefits of providing improved infrastructure for the telecommunications network have been taken into account and acknowledged, they are not considered to outweigh the visual harm that of this proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the area, residents of the surrounding residential properties and the wider community. Given all the above, the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area and is contrary to relevant policies the Local Plan (2017) and advice contained in the NPPF.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposed development, by reason of its siting, appearance, size, scale and prominent location, would be visually intrusive, resulting in an incongruous and obtrusive form of development, adding to clutter on the open area and would appear out of keeping with the character of the surrounding street scene and would have a detrimental impact on local visual amenity and on the character and appearance of the wider Area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to adopted Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Development Management, Development Plan Document (2017), and Policy SP11 of the Haringey Local Plan (2017) and as such Policy SI 6 of the adopted London Plan 2021 and as such prior approval is required and refused.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

**PRIOR APPROVAL IS REQUIRED AND REFUSED**

### **Refusal Reasons:**

The proposed development, by reason of its siting, appearance, size, scale and prominent location, would be visually intrusive, resulting in an incongruous and obtrusive form of development, adding to clutter within this area of Metropolitan Open Area and would appear out of keeping with the character of the surrounding street scene and would have a detrimental impact on local visual amenity and on the character and appearance of the wider area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to adopted Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Development Management, Development Plan Document (2017), and Policy SP11 of the Haringey Local Plan (2017) and as such Policy SI 6 of the adopted London Plan 2021 and as such prior approval is required and refused.

