



Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2023/2200
Application Type:	Prior notification: Development by telecoms operators
Address:	Land at Broadwater Lodge, Higham Road, London N17 6NN
Proposal:	The proposed installation of a telecommunications base station comprising a 20m monopole, supporting 6 no antennas, 2 no dishes together with 2 no ground-based equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto. (Prior Notification)
Case Officer:	Kwaku Bossman-Gyamera
Valid Date:	14/08/2023
Applicant:	Cornerstone
Agent:	Ms Dianne Perry

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

PRIOR APPROVAL IS REQUIRED AND APPROVED

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposed Development

2.1 This is a prior notification application for the installation of a monopole mast with 6 no. antennas, 2 no. dishes and for the installation of three ancillary cabinets. The overall height of the mast with antennae/apertures would be 20m high pole. 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 green verge and would be set upon a new concrete base.

Site and Surroundings

2.3 The application site is position on the small piece of green verge immediately adjacent to the Broadwater Lodge on Higham Lodge opposite the junction with Clonmell Road to the south. The application is located within the public highways to the rear/edge of the footpath. A number of vertical elements including columns and road safety signage together with street trees are located in the immediate area. The surrounding area is primarily residential in character with allotments

and Lordship Recreation Ground being located to the northwest and Broadwater Lodge located to the rear.

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

Relevant Planning and Enforcement History

2.5 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: There are no Transport objections to this application.

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 The application has been publicised by way of 57 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: 0

Objecting: 0

Supporting: 0

5 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

6.1 Siting and appearance

6.2 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.”

6.2 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 provide additional capacity into the network at this location to provide an enhance the coverage of the 5G technologies ensuring that this area of West Green has access to the latest technologies. Other factors that have influenced the site selection process include – this is location, existing mast sites area not capable of supporting additional equipment compliment to extend coverage reach across the target area and prospective in-fill mast sites are extremely limited.

6.2 Proposal 20m high imitation pole mat has been chosen to minimise its visual impact upon the area, as it represents a form of development that is commonplace within highway verges throughout the country. Furthermore, at this location, the chosen site offers the opportunity to site a mast that:

- Having regard to predominantly residential nature of the cell search area the mast can be located in a position relatively distant from the residential dwellings (in this instance it is more than twice its height from the nearest dwelling).
- Benefits from a backcloth of trees along the site boundary of up to 12m, ensuring that the mast will not appear as stark and obtrusive as would otherwise be the case without such a backcloth.
- Elsewhere within the immediate area, particularly along Higham Road, there is significant additional tree planting which will assist in screening/softening more distant views of the proposal.

- At this location the prevailing street furniture, against which the mast would be viewed, is the tallest within the area, again serving to minimise the perception of the height of the mast.

6.3 The above represents a set of circumstances to demonstrate that, in terms of the chosen siting of the mast, and the design as a mast, the proposal is the most suitable having regard to constraints imposed by the character of the area and the technical requirement to provide additional coverage.

6.4 Turning now to the height of the proposed mast, it is recognised that at 20 it will constitute the tallest item of street furniture within the locality, being 4m above the height of the existing trees. However, the proposed height of the mast is unavoidable, given that it is to support the antennas of at least two operators, which are to be positioned internally one above the other. This is required to ensure that the mast retains its slim profile whilst also ensuring that the adjacent trees do not obstruct transmissions from the antennas contained therein. It is considered that such a design solution would represent an additional item of street furniture that would be more immediately noticeable within the street scene as a purpose designed mast rather than a telegraph pole, and hence be more visually jarring than the proposed 20m mast.

6.5 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed mast is situated within the most sensitive location available to the applicants and that the most appropriate design solution has been chosen. However, despite the careful design and siting as stated above, it will have a degree of impact upon the character and appearance of the area primarily by virtue of its height. A balancing exercise must therefore be taken to determine whether it has been demonstrated that, the degree of visual harm is offset by whether or not there is a demonstrable need for the proposal. This report has already set out that, in officers view, there is demonstrable requirement for the mast to provide coverage within the area. In this instance, officer is content that the degree of harm created by the proposal, particularly having regards to its height, is sufficient to justify the limited harm created by the proposal.

6.6 Proposal mast is located within a predominantly residential area, though is to be sited upon a site that, due to the extent of the highway at this location and the adjacent Broadway Lodge building, is perhaps as distant from housing as is possible, having regards to the limited extent of the search area and the technical requirements of the operators. The nearest residential dwellings to the proposal are directly opposite across the busy road. The mast and cabinets would be off set from direct views obtainable from habitable rooms of these adjacent houses and there will be no unacceptable impact upon the outlook from nearby residential properties.

6.7 Having regards to the distances involved, the slimline nature and appearance of the proposed mast, and partial screening/backcloth provided by the existing trees, it is considered that the proposal will not significantly result in any undue impact upon the amenities currently enjoyed by the occupiers of any dwellings.

6.8 The proposed siting and design of the cabinets, are, over which they are considered to not add undue clutter to the street and harm the visual character of the area. The proposed mast and associated cabinets would be located at edge of the footway along Higham Road and would not impinge on movement of pedestrians. In addition, no highways issues would arise from the proposal.

Other matters

6.9 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.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The proposed 20m high mast is sited in a location and is of such a height as to form a reasonably prominent addition to the street scene, limited due to its careful siting and sensitive design. However, it is considered that in this instance there is demonstrable requirement for the proposed structure, having regard to the operator operational needs there are not considered to be any more acceptable alternative locations for the mast or more sympathetic design solutions. These factors are considered material to the extent that the degree of limited visual harm created by the proposal is outweighed by for the reasons as set out in this report.

7.2 In addition, the proposal is not expected to result in any undue impacts upon residential amenity or highway safety, and the applicant's have confirmed that the base station will be fully ICNIRP compliant.

8. RECOMMENDATION

PRIOR APPROVAL IS REQUIRED AND GRANTED.

Conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed in this decision notice, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives:

INFORMATIVE: Hours of Construction Work

The applicant is advised that under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, construction work which will be audible at the site boundary will be restricted to the following hours:-

8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday

8.00am - 1.00pm Saturday

and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

INFORMATIVE: Land Ownership

The applicant is advised that this planning permission does not convey the right to enter onto or build on land not within his ownership.