
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2017

by S J Buckingham BA (Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI FSA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 5th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/W/17/3170024

South of Asda Roundabout, North Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 8UH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant approval required under Class A of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015
 - The appeal is made by EE Ltd. & Hutchinson 3G UK Ltd. against the decision of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02216/TEL, dated 8 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is GPDO application for proposed 4G (fourth generation) upgrade to existing equipment.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and approval is granted under the provisions of Class A of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015 for the siting and appearance of the GPDO application for proposed 4G (fourth generation) upgrade to existing equipment at land South of Asda Roundabout, North Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 8UH in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/02216/TEL, dated 8 December 2016, and the plans submitted with it.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The proposal is for the installation of a 12 m high monopole incorporating a replica street light, in replacement for an existing 10 m mast of similar design. It would be accompanied by a freestanding cabinet, which would be permitted development without prior approval and which, I noted on site, had already been installed. The new equipment is intended to facilitate the 4G upgrade, and would be slightly wider than the existing mast.
4. The area around the proposed mast has relatively broad pavements lining the busy North Shoebury Road, and is host to several groups of cabinets and masts housing telecommunications systems, including the appeal equipment. The existing mast sits on the back edge of the pavement, next to the car park and landscaped area around the Meadowlark pub, while facing it across North Shoebury Road is a large green area, with dwellings set beyond it. There is a

large superstore to the north and a park to the south. The area therefore contains green areas of moderate value in appearance, but the presence of the wide road, punctuated regularly with large lampposts, mean that it is not overall particularly visually sensitive.

5. The appeal proposal would replace an existing mast with one that would be two metres higher, but would continue to function also as a street lamp. It would not therefore increase the number of masts in the area and would not add to clutter alongside the low level cabinets. Other masts in the vicinity include one other also functioning as a street lamp, and one which is not, and is noticeably higher and thicker. The proposal would not therefore appear particularly obtrusive or out of character in this setting. It appears to me therefore that the effect on the character of the area by virtue of its design and height would be limited, and would not cause harm.
6. Although the Council has stated that it considers the design of a luminair with the antenna installed on top would be unacceptable, the submitted plans suggest that it would appear as a single structure, and it appears to me would not be particularly conspicuous in an area of tall street lights.
7. The appellant has drawn my attention to the fact that the proposed equipment would support the introduction of faster broadband, and I conclude that this would constitute a benefit which would weigh in favour of the application. The use of an existing site in order to keep the number of such masts and sites for their installation to a minimum, is also a benefit.
8. I conclude therefore that the appeal proposal would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, and would confer some benefits by virtue of limiting the number of telecoms sites and supporting faster broadband, both aspirations of the National Planning Policy Framework. It would also therefore comply with the requirements of policies KP2 and CP4 of the Council's Local Development Plan Core Strategy 2007 for development to maintain and enhance the character of areas, and with policies DM1 and DM3 of the Development Management Document 2015 which seek development which respects and responds positively to local context, and with the advice contained within the Design and Townscape Guide which favours antennae which are disguised as street furniture.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above therefore and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed. No conditions are necessary, as the development order imposes relevant conditions as standard.

S J Buckingham

INSPECTOR