
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2019

by M Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/19/3219693

Pavement adj. to Horsham Road, Bramley, Surrey GU5 0ER

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant approval required under Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Vodafone Ltd against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref TC/2018/0003, dated 15 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2018.
 - The development proposed is a 15m replica telegraph pole mast and associated dark green steel cabinet.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and approval is granted under the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the siting and appearance of a 15m replica telegraph pole mast and associated dark green steel cabinet at land at Pavement adj. to Horsham Road, Bramley, Surrey GU5 0ER in accordance with the terms of the application Ref TC/2018/0003, dated 15 June 2018, and the plans submitted with it.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, bearing in mind the sites location within the Bramley Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The site lies within the Bramley Conservation Area (the CA). The significance of this designated heritage asset lies in part due to imposing period properties which are located adjacent to highways together with stone and brick walls along the highway, with a prevalence of trees also lining roads.
4. The proposed mast would be sited to the rear of a pedestrian footway, adjacent to a stone wall which delineates a grass bank, set above the level of the footway. Atop the grass bank are a number of large trees, extending to a significant height. Against this backdrop, the proposed mast would not be an overly prominent feature in the streetscene, particularly from longer distance views along Horsham Road.
5. The presence of large tree specimens along the road creates a distinct sense of height in the streetscene and creates context for the height of the proposed mast. The submitted information indicates that the total height of the mast would not

exceed that of the adjacent trees and as such, would not be an overly dominant vertical element. Rather, it would sit acceptably within its context, well-related to the scale of existing features.

6. Whilst I note the presence of some road signs in the vicinity, together with a bus shelter and a small cabinet, there is not a large amount of street furniture present within the area. The proposed scheme would introduce some additional elements into the street, however given the scarcity of other features, this would not result in any visually cluttered appearance. The area also includes a busy road and there are premises nearby, for example a petrol filling station, that do not replicate the traditional proportions of other buildings nearby. As a consequence, the provision of the proposed mast and cabinet, as a modern element, would not harmfully contrast with the general characteristics of the location.
7. The mast itself would be finished in a timber textured GRP and would be coloured dark brown to replicate the appearance of a traditional wooden telegraph pole. Whilst taller than a typical telegraph pole, the appearance of the mast, reproducing a not atypical feature of highways within settlements, would further ensure that it integrates appropriately with its surroundings.
8. Accordingly, in paying special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, I find that the proposed scheme would not have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the area, including the Bramley Conservation Area. It would thereby also preserve the significance of the CA as a designated heritage asset. Whilst the Council's reason for refusal does not refer to any local or national policy, I consider that the scheme would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which requires electronic communication equipment to be sympathetically designed and that development considers the significance of designated heritage assets.

Other Matters

9. Interested parties have raised concern over the effect of the proposal on the safe use of the pedestrian footway. In this respect, I note that the Council does not object on this ground and given the width of the footway at this location, I have no reason to consider that the proposal would hinder the safe use of the footway. The Framework outlines that health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure should not be set. In respect of perceived health impacts, I note that the required Declaration of Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines has been provided and as such I have no reason to consider this matter further.
10. No substantive evidence has been provided in respect of the possible devaluation of nearby properties. Furthermore, whilst I have noted the effect of the existing trees within my reasoning above, there is no suggestion that these trees would need to be removed in the future. Thus, these matters have had little bearing on my decision. Given my findings above, there would be no adverse effect on the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR