The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 August 2020

by Alison Scott BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y5420/W/20/3250501
Junction St Ann's and Seven Sisters, South Tottenham, Haringey, London N15 6NP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by MBNL against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Haringey.
- The application Ref HGY/2019/2812, dated 16 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2019.
- The development proposed is The installation of a 20m monopole, 12 No. antenna apertures, equipment cabinets, the removal of the existing 12.1m monopole, 3 No. antennas, redundant equipment cabinets and development ancillary thereto.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a footway located close to the junction of Seven Sisters and St Ann's Road. The area is a mix of both commercial with various shops located along Seven Sisters Road, and residential, with Kerswell Close adjacent and houses opposite. An existing monopole of approximately 12.1m high is located within the footway close to the appeal site.

4. The appeal proposal would be located on the footway that runs parallel to St Ann's Road and approximately 15m south east of the existing monopole. Behind the appeal site is a grassed embankment with mature and tall trees.

5. The proposed development by MBNL and operators EE Ltd and H3G (UK) Ltd, have explained within their Statement of Case the necessity for the proposal in order to upgrade the existing equipment. It would be positioned close to existing equipment for infrastructure reasons, although the appellant confirms that the existing site cannot be used due to the presence of underground utilities. The existing monopole and cabinets would be removed as a consequence.

6. The equipment would serve to roll out the new 5G infrastructure whilst including 2G, 3G and 4G equipment. The appellant has submitted technical information in support of their scheme. The existing monopole cannot be upgraded to support the required technology. I understand the requirement for the number of equipment cabinets and the increased height in infrastructure would be necessary for technical reasons to avoid interference due to mast sharing, the topography of the site, and to ensure compliance with the ICNIRP. I do not disagree that this is the case.

7. Issues pertaining to increased speed, improved home working, smart cities and a number of Government statements and policies to support and drive towards advanced digital connectivity is also referenced by the appellant, as well as the Building Mobile Britain guidance. I accept the significance of the telecommunication industry, the need to support digital technologies and their growth, and that both the National Planning Policy Framework and the London Plan recognises the importance of the telecommunications industry.

8. The land to which the development would be sited is footway. Whilst the proposal would be viewed against a backdrop of trees that would provide some mitigation to its appearance, however at approximately 20m in height, it would be taller than the trees that are currently growing within the raised landscaped embankment.

9. Furthermore, the monopole would be viewed against the raised railway bridge that spans the road junction. However, this does not provide a vertical context to the proposal. There is already a combination of existing streetlamps, telegraph poles, traffic enforcement camera and street signs located close to the appeal site. However, whilst it would be narrow in girth, the proposed monopole would be significantly taller than these existing features within and close to the footway. The equipment would not relate to these structures but would instead appear conspicuous and out of character within the street scene.

10. It would not resemble the existing monopole that is much simpler in appearance. The upper part of the tower would further draw attention to itself as the proposed model is a significantly different design, despite the intended finished colour.

11. As stated before, there is proliferation of street furniture at the site and this is located within close proximity to one another on a standard sized footway width. The proposed monopole taken together with its series of supporting ground-based cabinets located close to the monopole, would further add to a visually cluttered appearance to the street scene.

12. This is also highlighted by the photomontages presented with the appeal by the appellant as it demonstrates how visible the proposal would be from a range of viewpoints, emphasising the cluttered appearance that would ensue. The site's proposed location would result in short and medium distance views from Seven Sisters Road and St Ann's Road. Given its height and design, it would be visually exposed within the area. The character and appearance of the area would be harmed as a consequence.

13. It would not comply with the Haringey Development Management Development Plan Document 2017 Policy DM1 to deliver high quality of design and for development to relate positively to their locality, or Policy DM3 for telecommunication to have no adverse effect on the street scene, amongst its

other considerations. Furthermore, it would be contrary to Policy SP11 of the Haringey's Local Plan Strategic Policies 2013-2026 (2013) in its design aims and to respect local context and character.

14. The proposal would not affect a heritage asset or landscapes. I therefore find no conflict with Policy 7.8 of the London Plan as the proposal does not compromise the historic environment or landscapes.

Other Matters

15. I am also aware that a very limited number of alternative sites have been explored by the appellant, and this also includes the existing site, although these have been discounted for various technical reasons. Whilst alternative sites including mast sharing is encouraged, the very limited number of alternative sites investigated weighs against the development.

16. The appellant states that if the proposal where located in the existing location, it would be closer to the St Ann's Conservation Area (CA). There is no evidence before me to demonstrate that there would be an adverse effect of the monopole on the character or appearance of the CA however.

17. I am also mindful of the advantages of the telecommunications industry and the importance of this in the recent Covid-19 pandemic and the implications of this on the mobile technology sector. This has been taken into account in my assessment, although I am not persuaded in favour of the scheme.

18. In my decision making process I have also taken account of the location of the residential dwellings close to the appeal site and whether or not they can view the monopole; that the pavement width that would remain around the monopole may be the same as the existing monopole arrangement; that there may only have been one objection to the proposal; and it would not result in a net increase of monopoles to the area. However, these factors do not outweigh the harm I have described.

The balancing exercise

19. I have had regard to the need for the development and the justifications put forward by the appellant. However, despite the evidence presented, bringing all these factors together, the significant harm that I have found that would arise to the character and appearance of the area, these matters do not lead me to a different conclusion.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR