
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2020

by G Rollings BA (Hons) MAUD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/20/3249834

Land at Sipson Road, West Drayton, Hillingdon, London, UB7 9JJ

- 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 Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 4634/APP/2019/2717, dated 13 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a 20m monopole, 12 no. antenna apertures, equipment cabinets, the removal of the existing 14.7m monopole, 3 no. antennas, redundant equipment cabinets and development ancillary thereto.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since its determination of the application, the Council has adopted its *Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020)* (Part 2), which replace the policies of the Unitary Development Plan, including those listed in the decision notice to which I make no further reference.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the West Drayton Green Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The proposed development comprises several components as set out above, with the addition of 10 protective bollards aligned with the road edge, laid out on a grassed strip of adopted highway land between the parallel carriageways of Harmondsworth Road and Dell Road. The latter accommodates a shopping parade. It is within the West Drayton Green Conservation Area.
5. The site is just within the boundary of the Conservation Area and is alongside another monopole with a similar height to that existing on the site, together with associated cabinets. It is in a busy and well-trafficked location, and there are limited views towards the base of the site from other parts of the Conservation Area, although the monopoles are visible from the road approaches. Opposite the site, on Harmondsworth Road, there are several modern buildings of different styles which do not appear to be sympathetic to

- the Conservation Area. Taking these factors into account, the site makes a minimal to moderate contribution to the significance of the Area and has a neutral impact on its wider setting.
6. The proposed monopole would replace one of the existing two monopoles on the verge, with a separation of around 32 metres between the retained and existing poles. The proposed structure would appear substantially taller than the retained monopole from viewpoints around the site, particularly the south. Nonetheless, given that there are already two monopoles in view, additional harm resulting from the incremental impact of the replacement monopole would be minimal. It would be visible from the aforementioned approaches, but its slender form limits its overall impact on its built-up surroundings.
 7. Equipment cabinets on the site would be removed, retained and added, resulting in an overall increase in the number of cabinets on the site. There is a high degree of visual clutter within the area immediately around the site, including roadside barriers, traffic signals and various styles of lamp columns, directional signage, notice boards and CCTV stanchions, all of which can be seen in dispersed or clustered formation, depending on the direction of approach. The overall visual impression of the area immediately surrounding the site is incoherent and clamorous. The retained and new cabinets would be additional to those associated with the retained monopole nearby to the north, and there are other utility cabinets also in the vicinity. This would result in numerous clusters arranged in a line for several metres along Harmondsworth Road, and the increased large number, spread and visibility of the cabinets, in conjunction with those existing, would significantly worsen the substantial clutter in this already visually disjointed area.
 8. Despite the minimal contribution of the site to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, for the above reasons the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance its character or appearance. The harm would be less than substantial, and in applying the balancing test of paragraph 196 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2019), I must weigh this harm against the public benefits of the proposal. The installation would be shared between mobile networks and would improve the telecommunications of the area and be of benefit to its users. I appreciate that the appeal site was chosen to keep the overall number of stations in the area to a minimum in accordance with the advice of Framework paragraph 113, with no alternative sites considered, but in this instance I am not satisfied that consolidation in a Conservation Area is the best option, given the high degree of visual clutter that would result. Accordingly, I am not convinced that the proposal's benefits outweigh the harm.
 9. I have also considered the appellant's suggestion that the ten proposed bollards could be omitted from the proposal, but this would only minimally affect the overall visual harm of the proposal.
 10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West Drayton Green Conservation Area. It would conflict with the *Council's Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies* (2012) BE1 and HE1, Part 2 Policies DMHB 1, DMHB 4, DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHB 21, and Policy 7.8 of *The London Plan* (2016). Together, these seek to provide high quality development, preserve historic heritage and minimise the visual impact of telecommunications facilities,

amongst other considerations, and are generally consistent with the Framework.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, and having taken all other matters into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Rollings

INSPECTOR