



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 October 2020

by T J Burnham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/W/20/3246506 Eltham Road, Eltham, London SE9 5LN

- 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 Royal Borough of Greenwich Council.
 - The application Ref 19/2406/F, dated 4 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a 20m monopole, 12 no. antenna apertures, equipment cabinets, the removal of the existing 11.7m monopole, 3 no. antennas, redundant equipment cabinets and development ancillary thereto.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of a 20m monopole, 12 no. antenna apertures, equipment cabinets, the removal of the existing 11.7m monopole, 3 no. antennas, redundant equipment cabinets and development ancillary thereto at Eltham Road, Eltham, London SE9 5LN in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 19/2406/F, dated 4 July 2019 subject to the conditions detailed below;
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 002, 100, 150, 215 & 265.
 - 3) Prior to the first use of the permitted equipment at the site details of their colours and finishes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed colours and finishes shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of the proposal has been altered from the application form to the decision notice. The original description however adequately describes the proposals and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The area within which the appeal site is situated is of an urban feel and partly commercial appearance. To the south east of the site is a McDonalds restaurant and car park while Mottingham Ambulance station sits to the south. The street scene when approaching the site from both directions along the A210 is busy and cluttered including tall lighting columns and various forms of road signage.
5. I accept that the monopole would be a more notable feature due to the increase in height over that existing. However, given the presence of the existing monopole, those in the locality will already be accustomed to viewing such a feature. Further, the evidence indicates that it is the proposed height which is required to enable its proper function in providing 5G network capability and nothing within the evidence contradicts this assertion.
6. I am not convinced that the replacement monopole location closer to the bus stop would increase its prominence significantly as it would generally be more visible from medium distance views in both directions along the road, rather than from directly beneath. The monopole would be viewed when approaching from the west in the context of tall trees situated on the corner of the A210 and Eltham Green Road. No detrimental impact on the setting of the nearby Eltham Conservation Area has been identified by the parties and I have no reason to disagree.
7. The proposal would therefore be appropriate in relation to the character and appearance of the area and would therefore accord with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2016) and Policies DH1 and DH(c) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan (2014) which amongst other things, require proposals to exhibit good design quality and in relation to telecommunications equipment, be located on a site which causes minimal visual impact subject to operational needs. I have not identified any conflict with Policy IM(b) relating to walking and cycling.

Other Matters

8. There is nothing within the evidence to suggest the Council has concerns over and above the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. Nonetheless, the evidence indicates that the possibility of placing the equipment on a building has been considered. However, most development within the immediate area is of relatively low density and height and I am not therefore surprised that an appropriate siting on an existing building has not been identified. The evidence indicates that the proposal will make allowances for site sharing, which should assist in avoiding the need for further such structures in the vicinity.

Conditions

9. I do not have the benefit of any suggested conditions before me. In addition to the standard three-year time limitation for commencement, I have imposed a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans in the interests of certainty. Given the uncertainty over the colour and finish of the equipment, I have included a condition requiring such details so that a finish most appropriate to the area can be agreed between the parties.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions.

T J Burnham
INSPECTOR