
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 October 2020

by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y5420/W/19/3243364

Corner of Rivulet Road and Great Cambridge Road, London

Easting:532566 Northing:191168

- 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/2019/2051, dated 12 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 September 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.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site occupies a prominent position alongside Great Cambridge Road. The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of uses, including residential properties and shops. In the area closest to where the proposed monopole would be sited, the buildings are two storey in height in the form of residential dwellings. There is another monopole installation close to the appeal site, together with a proliferation of street furniture, including lighting columns and a pedestrian bridge over Great Cambridge Road, along with mature trees. These factors give the area a distinctly mixed, urban character and appearance.
4. The proposed monopole would be substantially higher than that of the existing installation and would have a bulkier form, in particular at its top section. It would also greatly exceed the height of the prevailing built form in the surrounding area and of existing street furniture. Due to both its height and bulk, the proposed monopole would form a visually dominant feature within the street scene and one which would be out of character within its surroundings. Furthermore, it would sit in an isolated and exposed location due to its positioning within an area of open space and due to it being in close proximity to Great Cambridge Road and to the end of Rivulet Road. As a result of these factors, it would form an incongruous feature in the street scene.

5. I therefore conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area by reason of its height, bulk and positioning. Consequently, the proposal would fail to accord with Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Development Management DPD 2017 and Policy SP11 of the Haringey Local Plan 2017, where they seek to safeguard character and appearance. The proposal would also not be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework), where it refers to achieving well-designed places. The decision notice refers to Policy 7.8 of the London Plan 2016, but as this refers to the historic environment and landscapes it is not relevant to the appeal proposal.

Other Matters

6. The appellant has drawn attention to the support for the delivery of high quality networks that is afforded by The Framework, other government documents and the development plan, and to the significant social and economic benefits that would arise. They further advise that the proposal would promote mast sharing resulting in fewer installations elsewhere, it would utilise a site close to an existing mast and that the height of the mast is the lowest that is possible in order for the necessary network coverage to be provided.
7. The support for the telecommunications network that is set out in planning policy, the benefits it provides and the technical parameters which restrict the form that telecommunications installations can take offer substantial weight in favour of the appeal proposal. However, they do not in themselves outweigh the harm to character and appearance that I have identified in this instance. There may be some benefit from mast sharing as a result of the proposed development, however this too alone, nor in combination with the other considerations I have outlined, does not justify a harmful development.
8. The appellant considers that there are no alternative sites that the proposed installation could be located on. Were there to be no other alternative sites available, this too is a matter which would offer support for the proposed development and it would need to be weighed in the planning balance against the harm that I have identified as arising to the character and appearance of the area, and the resultant conflict with the development plan.
9. However, in this regard, although the appellant has referred to an assessment of alternative sites having been undertaken, I have not been provided with convincing evidence to demonstrate whether or not there are alternative sites available in the wider locality on which the proposed development could be located and on which it would have a lesser impact. Given the significant differences in the form and impact of the existing and proposed installations it is both reasonable and necessary for a more comprehensive assessment of alternative locations to have been provided. Without such an assessment, it is not possible to make an informed judgement on the matter.
10. As a whole therefore, based on the information before me, I am unable to reach a conclusion on the availability or otherwise of alternative sites. Accordingly, this consideration cannot carry sufficient weight in this instance to outweigh the conflict with the development plan, which would arise due to the harm to the character and appearance of the area by positioning the proposed development specifically on the appeal site.

11. The appellant has referred to permitted development rights regarding telecommunications installations however, by virtue of the fact that a planning application has been submitted to the Council, it would appear implicit that they do not represent a viable fallback position taken against the proposed appeal development as a whole. Reference is also made to the fact there was limited public objection to the proposed development. These considerations do not however outweigh the harm that the proposed development would cause.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graham Wraight

INSPECTOR