
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 May 2016

by Clive Tokley MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 June 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/16/3143922

Land at junction of Harmondsworth Road and Sipson Road, West Drayton, 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 CTIL and Telefonica UK Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 56867/APP/2015/2910, dated 31 July 2015, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2015.
 - The development proposed is installation of a 15m high street works pole supporting 6no antennas, 2no ground based 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 15m high street works pole supporting 6no antennas, 2no ground based cabinets and development ancillary thereto at Land at junction of Harmondsworth Road and Sipson Road, West Drayton, UB7 9JJ. The permission is in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 56867/APP/2015/2910 dated 31 July 2015 subject to the following conditions:
 - 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 drawings: 100 Issue C, 200 Issue E and 300 Issue E.
 - 3) When no longer needed for reception or transmission purposes the street works pole and cabinets shall be removed from the land as soon as reasonably practicable. The land shall then be restored to its condition before the development took place (grass verge).

Main Issue

2. The main issues are:-

- Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the West Drayton Green Conservation Area (CA).
 - Whether any harm caused to the CA would be outweighed by the need to site the installation in the location proposed having regard to the potential availability of alternative sites.
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Reasons

3. At its northern end the CA comprises mainly C19 and C20 housing with areas of open space to the south. Harmondsworth Road skirts the eastern edge of the CA and for most of its length the west side of the road is open land in various uses including a cemetery, allotment gardens and partly-wooded parkland. The east side of Harmondsworth Road has a more built up character including, at the junction with Sipson Road, a parade of shops with two floors of residential accommodation above. The buildings fronting east side of Harmondsworth Road are outside the CA whereas the grass verge between the service road and the main road, including the appeal site, is within the CA.
4. The largely undeveloped west side of Harmondsworth Road is fronted by mature trees and hedges and contrasts with the east side of the road with its shopping parade, road junction and narrow grass verges. The area around the junction is populated with street lights, CCTV camera poles, traffic lights, road signs, railings and utilities cabinets of various sizes and colours. Within this area is one street works pole similar to that now proposed. To both the north and south of the junction the density of road side paraphernalia decreases.
5. When viewed from the north, from within the CA, the tops of the taller structures (lamp posts and street works pole) are seen above the roof level of the shopping parade however the lower level structures merge into the background. When approaching from the south the structures are more clearly distinguishable against the more open background of the junction and the trees and local shop beyond. However the existing street works pole appears to fall into the line of the street lights. Whilst being taller and bulkier than the street lights I consider that it is not unduly intrusive. When approaching the CA along Sipson Road the street pole and utilities boxes are not apparent until close to the junction and the density of structures appears to be less than from the other viewpoints.
6. The appellant indicates that the proposal is needed to provide new 4G coverage and enhance 2G and 3G capacity in the area. The Council does not challenge the need for the proposal and the Officer report indicates that the Council is satisfied that the appellant has demonstrated that no preferable alternative locations are available or acceptable (including the existing nearby installation). It appears to me that there are very limited opportunities for development of the type proposed within the search area. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates that when determining applications for telecommunications development the need for the installation should not be questioned. I have no reason to disagree with the appellant's indication that the installation is necessary and that no satisfactory alternatives are available.
7. The proposed pole would be 20m from the existing pole and the southernmost proposed cabinet would be about 14m from the nearest existing cabinet. In the context the existing tall structures at the junction I consider that when viewed from Harmondsworth Road in both directions the proposed street pole would not unduly detract from the character or appearance of the area. The pole would be more prominent from Sipson Road where it would be seen against the background of the trees to the west. Cabinets of the type proposed are commonplace within urban streets and being separated from the existing cabinets they would not result in an unacceptable concentration of such

structures. I consider that the proposal would not seriously harm the townscape of the area and therefore it would not conflict with the Council's specific policy for the consideration of telecommunications developments (Policy BE37 of the London Borough of Hillingdon UDP Saved Policies September 2007).

8. I consider that the additional structures would result in limited harm to the character and appearance of the CA in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site and would detract from views into the CA from Sipson Road. However the area around the proposal is not typical of the character of the CA and I consider that in this context the harm caused to the significance of the CA would be "less than substantial" as defined by the Framework.
9. The Framework sets out the importance of an advanced high quality communications infrastructure for sustainable growth and makes specific reference to the development of high speed broadband technology. This is reflected in the London Plan and the public benefit arising from the improvement of the telecommunications infrastructure is a material planning consideration that weighs in favour of the proposal.
10. Taking account of all matters I have concluded that the limited harm caused to the significance of the heritage asset (the CA) would be outweighed by the public benefit that would arise from improving the communications infrastructure.

Conditions

11. I have imposed the standard conditions limiting the time within which the development must be commenced and identifying the approved drawings. As the need for the proposal is the principal justification for the granting of permission I agree with the Council that a condition should be imposed requiring the removal of the development if it is no longer needed for telecommunications purposes.

Conclusion

12. I have concluded that the proposal would result in limited harm to the character and appearance of the CA; however that harm would be outweighed by the public benefit that would arise from improving the communications infrastructure and that the appeal should succeed.

Clive Tokley

INSPECTOR