

Application Number

P/2015/0123

Site Address

Highways Land On Lower Warberry Road
Torquay
Devon
TQ1 1SH

Case Officer

Verity Clark

Ward

Wellswood

Description

Removal of the existing column and the erection of a new 15m column with additional cabinets and ancillary development.

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

The proposal is for the erection of a 15m column with four additional cabinets and ancillary development.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in this location and without serious detriment to residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers or the character or appearance of the locality within the context of the Warberries Conservation Area.

The application is deemed to be acceptable for planning approval.

Recommendation

Conditional Approval

Statutory Determination Period

8 weeks, expired on 24/04/15.

Update

The application was brought before the April Development Management Committee. It was resolved to grant conditional approval for the application in line with officer recommendation. The application has been brought to the June Committee meeting as two additional representations were received and mistakenly not reported at the original committee meeting. No new issues were raised by the additional representations and petition.

Site Details

The application site is highways land on Lower Warberry Road located south of the block of flats 'Sorrento' and situated on an area of pavement 3.9 metres to the right of an existing telegraph pole.

The site is located within the Warberries Conservation Area.

Detailed Proposals

The proposal is to remove the existing 12.5 metre high telecommunication pole and install a 15 metre high telecommunications pole 12 metres to the left of the existing pole's location. The proposal also includes the addition of four street cabinets to be situated to the right hand side of the existing street cabinet.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

Urban Design Officer - Verbal Consultation: The proposal is considered to be acceptable. The location of the pole is in close proximity to existing street furniture and due to the location within the Conservation Area it is not considered that alterations to the design or forms of screening are appropriate.

Summary Of Representations

9 objections have been raised including 1 petition with 17 signatures. Issues raised:

- Impact upon the Conservation Area
- Visually obtrusive
- Relationship with nearby buildings
- Impact on light levels
- Alternative locations should be considered
- Impact on outlook
- Health impacts
- Impact on property values
- Insufficient consultation.

Relevant Planning History

P/2014/0504 Erection of a 15m column with additional cabinets and ancillary development. REFUSED 15/08/14

P/2008/1409 Telecommunications application - installation of 10M slimline monopole supporting shrouded antennas with equipment cabinet. APPROVED 05/12/08

Key Issues/Material Considerations

This application seeks permission for the erection of a 15 metre high telecommunications pole and four additional street cabinets. This will replace the existing 12.5 metre high telecommunications pole.

The existing telecommunications equipment provides coverage for the 2G network in the area. With the release of 4G the site needs to be upgraded to allow for 3G and 4G coverage. The existing column is structurally unable to accommodate the required amount of antennas and a stronger replacement structure is therefore required. The proposal is part of a joint venture by O2 and Vodafone and is intended in the long term to reduce the number of base stations nationally by consolidating single use base stations.

The applicant has noted that the site has been chosen as an existing base station is in situ and the upgrading of the site can be undertaken rather than works taking place in a new location. The overall impacts of the proposed upgrade can be undertaken with negligible additional visual impacts on the area.

It should be noted that guidance from the NPPF on determining planning applications for communications infrastructure states that:

"Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for telecommunications system, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure."

The key issues to consider in relation to this application are the impact the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the street scene within the context of the Warberries Conservation Area and the amenity enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Verbal consultation from the Council's Urban Design Officer has not raised an objection to the proposal. Although it is noted the proposal is within the Conservation Area the location of the pole is within close proximity to existing street furniture. The increase in overall height is not considered to significantly impact upon the street scene within the Conservation Area further than the existing equipment and in this instance alterations to the design or forms of screening are not considered to be appropriate to the location.

It should be noted that a proposal for a 15 metre high telecommunications pole located 1.8 metres to the left of the existing pole and four associated street cabinets was refused under application P/2014/0504 at the August 2014 Development Management Committee. This was due to the proposed impact on visual amenity of the adjacent block of flats by reason of its increased height and width in comparison to the existing telecommunications pole and it was considered that any proposal should therefore be placed in a less conspicuous position in order to mitigate its impacts. As no attempts were made to mitigate the visual impact of the proposal by way of its positioning and use of existing landscape features the proposal was considered to be contrary to Policies BES, BE1, BE5, INS and IN3 of the Saved Adopted Torbay Local Plan 1995 - 2011.

The current application follows on from this original application and has altered the location of the proposed pole in an attempt to reduce and mitigate the impact of the pole within the street scene. The proposed pole is located 3.9 metres to the right of an existing telegraph pole. This has therefore attempted to group together the street furniture, thus attempting to reduce the impact of the proposal within the street scene.

The proposal is considered to be an appropriate addition to the wider street scene. The proposed telecommunications pole will be 15 metres in height. This will replace the existing 12.5 metre high pole. Whilst it is acknowledged that the telecommunications equipment is located within the Conservation Area the design of the pole with associated antenna is of a streamline design that is considered to be appropriate within the context of the locality. The proposal is not considered to be of a materially detrimental design, appearance and height than the previously approved telecommunications equipment approved under application P/2008/1409 and the location of the proposed pole has been moved from the previously refused application P/2014/0504 in order to take on comments made at the Development Management Committee and the subsequent reason for refusal. The colour of the mast will be grey which is considered to be acceptable in this location. The proposed elevation plan shows the block of flats 'Sorrento' which is situated north of the proposed equipment. The increase in height of the pole will result in the total height of the pole being of a similar height to that of the block of flats. The impact of the proposed pole is however not considered to significantly impact upon light levels, or to be of a visually obtrusive nature to the nearby buildings that would warrant refusal and is situated to the far side of the building which is orientated at an angle that faces slightly away from the proposed location of the pole. This location is considered to be an improvement to the existing location of the pole which is situated in a prominent location in the centre of a fairly open area of pavement. Under this revised application the location of the pole is situated in closer proximity to the property 3 Bingfield Close. This is considered to be acceptable due to the distance from the property, the situation of the existing telegraph pole and the existing boundary treatment of the property.

The four additional street cabinets are considered to be appropriate in terms of design and location. They are to be sited on a section of pavement next to an existing street cabinet. The location will allow for adequate space for users of the pavement and will fit in with the wall located to the rear.

The proposal is therefore considered to maintain and preserve the character and appearance of the street scene within the Conservation Area.

In order to avoid a proliferation of redundant masts and in the interests of visual amenity a planning condition will be required to ensure any redundant equipment is permanently removed from the site and the land is returned to its former condition.

S106/CIL -
N/A

Conclusions

The proposed development is considered to be appropriate for planning approval, having regard to all national and local planning policies and all other

relevant material considerations.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

01. Should any part of the apparatus hereby approved become redundant it shall be permanently removed from the site and the land shall be reinstated to its former condition unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To avoid a proliferation of redundant masts, in the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with policies BES, BE1, IN3 and IN4 of the Torbay Local Plan 1995 - 2011.

Relevant Policies

BES - Built environment strategy
BE1 - Design of new development
BE5 - Policy in conservation areas
INS - Infrastructure strategy
IN3 - Telecommunications
IN4 - Redundant telecommunications equipment