Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0580/23 Recommendation: APPROVE

Site: Land North East Of Southern House, Yeoman Road, Worthing

Proposal: Application for Prior Approval for installation of Proposed 5G telecoms installation: H3G 15m street pole and additional equipment cabinets.

Date of Site Visit: 1 June

Neighbours Checked: Y

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

This application seeks prior approval for the installation of a 5G telecommunications installation comprising a 15 metre pole and associated equipment cabinets.

The application site is on the western side of Yeoman Road a short distance to the south of its junction with Yeoman Way. The Southern Water office building is to the south west of the site with its car park directly to the west. To the north west is Worthing Ambulance Station. The nearest residential properties are to the east in Conifer Drive, Chestnut Way and Lilac Close but those directly to the east are screened by trees, but some properties closer to the entrance to Conifer Drive to the south east are more visible.

Planning History:

None directly relevant to the application site, but a proposed mast at the junction of Limbrick Lane and Palatine Road was refused permission under reference AWDM/1082/22.

Consultations:

No comments received

Representations:

59 letters of objection have been received on the following grounds:

- inappropriate siting
- adverse impact upon the visual character of the area
- proximity to residential properties
- proximity to sensitive receptors
- detrimental to wildlife
- distracting to drivers
- existing reception is more than adequate
- health concerns including that the ICNIRP Certificate has been incorrectly filled in
- the mast is too tall

Of the objections received, 4 were from properties originally consulted as nearest neighbours to the site and 20 are from Worthing addresses;

Relevant Planning Policies:

Worthing Local Plan 2023

Policies DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment), DM14 Digital Infrastructure

National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2019)

Planning Practice Guidance (CLG 2014)

Planning Assessment

As a prior approval application, the Local Planning Authority is only able to take into account the siting and appearance of the installation.

The need for a mast in this general area was first the subject of an application ((from the same applicants) in 2022 for a mast about 200 metres to the south beyond the roundabout serving the A2032. The application was refused on the grounds that the proposal would adversely affect the character of the area and it had not been demonstrated that the site was the most appropriate in the vicinity. This was partly because of the nature of low lying buildings nearby and the proximity to residential properties. It is noted that included within this application are a dismissal of sites close to the previous refusal (partly because of visibility splay reasons but also noting the proximity of residential buildings).

As was noted in the recent Grand Avenue appeal decision, where a mast is refused it is necessary to find suitable alternative locations if a site is not considered acceptable and if such locations cannot be found, then a site may be granted permission even if there is some degree of harm to the visual character of the area. This recognises strong government support for the provision of new digital infrastructure which is consequently reflected in Local Plan policy.

With regard to this application, it is considered that the newly proposed location is far preferable to that previously refused. It is largely screened from nearby residential properties by the large tree screen opposite and is nearest to the large car park serving the Southern Water building. With further trees providing screening as a backdrop to the mast and given the lack of residential properties on the western side of the road, compared to far denser residential areas to the north, south and east, it is considered that this site is the most appropriate location for a new mast in the area.

It has been concluded repeatedly in appeal decisions that the Council can only consider siting and appearance in the determination of applications such as this and for the reasons set out above, the application is considered to be acceptable.

Recommendation

01 Compliance with approved Plans

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? Y

Case Officer:	Gary Peck	Date:	8 June 2023
Authorised by:	James Appleton	Date:	8th June 2023