

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

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| APPLICATION No: | N6/2013/1029/FP |
| APPLICATION Site: | Campus West, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City |

NOTATION:

The site lies within the Central Welwyn Garden City conservation area as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site comprises of 22m high building know as Campus West fronting onto the Campus on the corner with Digswell Road. Telecommunications equipment already exist upon the highest part of the roof of the main building.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks planning permission to replace and relocate the existing six antennas on to the new freestanding platforms on the lower roof level. The proposal also seeks to relocate the existing 600mm transmission dish and to add a further dish on the new freestanding platforms.

PLANNING HISTORY:

N6/1993/0418/FP - Installation of 6 PCN aerials 1.8m in length and 2, 600mm in diameter microwave dishes. Granted 2 September 1993

SUMMARY OF POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework

Circular 03/09: Costs Awards in Appeals and Other Planning Proceedings

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005:

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP2: Towns and Specified Settlements

R3: Energy Efficiency

D1: Quality of Design

D2: Character and Context

R21: Telecommunications Development

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS:

Environmental Health: Responded advising no comments

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:

None

REPRESENTATIONS:

This application has been advertised by site notice and press notice and no representations have been received. Period expired

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. Impact on the character and visual amenity of the area**
- 2. Other material planning considerations**

1. Impact on the character and visual amenity of the area

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the Government's intention of encouraging the facilitation of the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems. The use and re-use of existing sites is encouraged to minimise the need for new second and third generation base stations.

Policy R21 relates to telecommunications development and requires all proposals to be considered against a total of nine criteria. The following criteria are of particular relevance to the current application:

- (vi) That development must not harm the appearance of the streetscene, nor appear visually intrusive,*
- (vii) The development must not harm the character of a Conservation Area,*
- (viii) If erected on a building, it must not be out of keeping with the building, in terms of siting, scale, size, profile and colour, so as to harm the appearance of the building,*
- (ix) If proposed in areas designated for their landscape, historic or nature conservation importance, including Conservation Areas and the Green Belt, applicants must be able to demonstrate why sites outside these areas cannot be used*

The proposal is to replace and relocate the existing six antennas on to new freestanding platforms on the lower roof level from where they are currently mounted on the plant room, resulting in a reduction in height. Furthermore, the existing 600mm transmission dish in addition to new dish will be mounted onto the new free standing platforms.

The proposed installation is considered to be within the limits of what would be acceptable in this location and context. Whilst the proposed antennas will be relocated to a position closer to the edge of the roof when compared to the existing antennas which are located on an existing plant room, they will be reduced in height

and therefore the overall additional visual impact is minimal. Furthermore, taking into consideration that antennas already exist on the site which is within a conservation area, the proposed replacement and relocation of the six antennas and additional 600mm transmission dish will result in minimal impact upon the character of the conservation area. The proposal is therefore considered in accordance with the NPPF and policy R21 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005.

2. Other material planning considerations

Sustainable Development: The applicant has completed the sustainability checklist in accordance with policies SD1 and R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance, 2005.

The effect of the installation or its perceived effect upon the health and well being of those living in the vicinity of the proposed development: Part 46 of the National Planning Policy Framework states, *'Local planning authorities must determine application on planning grounds. They should not seek to determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure'*.

This application has been accompanied by ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) certificate, dated 16 June 2012, as a declaration of conformity with public exposure guidelines in accordance with EU Council recommendation on the limitation of exposure of the electromagnetic fields.

Protected Species The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with the National Planning Policy, Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as Circular 06/05.

Protected species such as great crested newts, otters, dormice and bats benefit from the strictest legal protection. These species are known as European Protected Species ('EPS') and the protection afforded to them derives from the EU Habitats Directive, in addition to the above legislation. Water voles, badgers, reptiles, all wild birds, invertebrates and certain rare plants are protected to a lesser extent under UK domestic law (NERC Act and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).

The existing site and development is such that there is not a reasonable likelihood of EPS being present on site nor would a EPS offence be likely to occur. It is therefore not necessary to consider the Conservation Regulations 2010 and amended 2012 Regulations further.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed replacement and relocation of the antennas and transmissions dishes and are not considered to cause any significant harm to the character of the conservation area and visual amenity of the area over-and-above that which currently exists at the site. In relation to health concerns, the current proposal meets the relevant guidance and guidelines produced by Central Government and the installation complies with the ICNIRP standards. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and

policy R21, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the requirements of the Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

1. C.2.1 Time limit for commencement of development
2. C.13.1 Development in accordance with approved plans/details: 100 Rev A & 101 Rev A & 102 Rev A received and dated 17 May 2013

Post Development

3. The telecommunications equipment hereby approved shall be removed from the site within 3 months of the use of the equipment permanently ceasing.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and in accordance with policy R21.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Councils website or inspected at these offices).

Signature of author..... Date.....