



E-Mail To; Development.control@wokingham.gov.uk

3rd October 2022

For the Attention of the Case Officer, Planning Application Number; 222846

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re; Land Adjacent to Elephant and Castle Public House, Broadwater Lane, Hurst, RG10 0EH.

Prior Approval Submission for the Proposed Erection of a 15m. Telecommunications Mast and Cabinet plus 3 Additional Cabinets and 10 No Paving Slabs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above Planning Application, Number; 222846. As will become clear Hurst Village Society (HVS) believes this application is essentially identical to a previous application (Number 211667), and so we would respectfully request that our comments which we submitted to The Planning Authority in relation to that application are also taken into account now.

Importantly, as the Society pointed out at that time, there were significant errors in the material submitted (supported by the Planning Inspector at Appeal) which are still included in the current application. With the apparent total disregard for other comments made by the Planning Inspector, and indeed the planning process as a whole, it is hard for a layperson to understand how the Planning Authority can consider this to be a Valid Application at all. Perhaps the Authority should be seen to be advising the applicant to withdraw, what is essentially a nonsense of an application, so as not to be seen to waste the valuable time of Planning Officers or open the planning process to public ridicule.

For the avoidance of doubt, HVS objects in the strongest possible terms to this current Prior Approval Submission.

In so doing the Society would once again wish to make it clear that we do not consider ourselves suitably qualified to question the technical justification or indeed the need for the service as detailed by the applicant, and stress that this Prior Approval Submission has been considered by HVS in terms of material planning considerations only.

In this regard whilst the Society welcomed the Planning Inspector's decision to dismiss the Appeal (APP/X0360/W/21/327998867) against the refusal of the original submission, it did at the time remind the membership and other members of the local community that the Inspector had accepted "the need for a new installation in this general area in order to provide an acceptable telecommunications network utilising 5G technology." This comment still holds good and reinforces the importance of the Planning Authority's responsibility to balance any actual and or potential harm on the character and appearance of any potential site of a 5G mast and the need for the installation.

The main factual considerations supporting The Society's objection to this Prior Approval Submission are;

- Reducing the height of the mast (the number of cabinets remains the same) from 18m to 15 m has no effect whatsoever on limiting any infringement upon the area's character and indeed the potential for harm is made worse when it is understood that contrary to the submission there is no natural screening present at all.
- Again the submission claims that there are no residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposed site for the mast. This is simply not true as it will be potentially positioned adjacent to the rear gardens of a number of such properties and is very close to the Elephant and Castle Public House and in particular it's well used children's play area.
- The detail and the interpretation of the extent to which the contents of the submission accord both with Local and National Planning Policy is not only inaccurate at best and simply untrue at worst, and is also highly repetitive.
- In the Society's opinion the proposed works will be to the visual detriment of the surrounding area and most definitely would result in demonstrable harm to the character of both the immediate and wider area. It is important to recognize that the potential site is on a Green Route which requires that any development proposals must demonstrate how the local green infrastructure is both protected and enhanced, which is clearly not the case here. The potential siting of this mast on a green verge adjacent to the A321 suggests that it is on Wokingham Borough Councils (WBC) Highways Land and it is



hoped that the Council's Highways Officers will oppose this submission on the basis of it being a road safety hazard to passing motorists using what is becoming an increasingly busy road.

- The applicant again surprisingly refers to the presence of streetlights but of course no such structures exist in this location, and in addition attempts to suggest that in accordance with good practice existing street furniture in the form of streetlights will enable the equipment to blend into the street scene; again blatantly untrue.
- It is essential that an applicant provides reasons why a selected site is in fact more beneficial and suitable than any other sites that were considered as well as a robust justification of why that site has been selected. There is no such justification for the rejection of other potential sites and the Planning Inspector made it clear in his Appeal judgement that "I am therefore not satisfied that alternatives have been adequately addressed".

In again reiterating Hurst Village Society's objection to this Prior Approval Submission for all the reasons stated above, it is appropriate to again remind the Planning Authority of this applicant's total disregard to The Planning Inspector's concerns and therefore of The Planning Process itself, in that in his judgement; "the appearance of the proposed development would be significantly harmful to the overall character and appearance of the locality. This in itself is sufficient to rule out development at this site."

The Society hopes these comments, which clearly reflect the concerns of many other individuals, are helpful in your consideration of this Prior Approval submission.

Yours faithfully,

John Osborne, on behalf of Hurst Village Society

