

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Planning Applications Committee  
**Date** 1 March 2012  
**Report of** Head of Planning Services  
**Subject** 11/02232/T Site North East Of Cringleford Bridge Eaton Street Norwich

Item  
**5(5)**

### SUMMARY

<b>Description:</b>	Installation of telecommunications equipment cabinet.
<b>Reason for consideration at Committee:</b>	Prior Notification
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approve
<b>Ward:</b>	Eaton
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jo Hobbs Planner 01603 212526
<b>Valid Date:</b>	12 January 2012
<b>Applicant:</b>	Openreach
<b>Agent:</b>	Regina Watson

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Site

##### Location and Context

1. The site is located on Eaton Street in the ward of Eaton to the south west of the city. The site is within the highway verge on the south side of Eaton Street directly adjacent to the existing pavement and road.
2. The site is within the Eaton Conservation Area, the designated River Valley of the River Yare and the County Wildlife Site of the River Yare. The site is also designated urban greenspace under the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan.
3. The application site is a mown grass verge of around 5m in depth with a mature hedge along the south of this verge. There are some trees within this highway verge along Eaton Street.
4. There are existing structures in the highway verge including newly replaced street lights with associated equipment cabinet, an existing equipment cabinet operated by Openreach further to the south west near Cringleford Bridge and other traffic signs.

##### Planning History

5. There is no relevant planning history to this application.

## **Equality and Diversity Issues**

6. There are no significant equality or diversity issues. The width of the pavement is not compromised by the proposed cabinet, allowing ease of access for all pedestrians, including parents with push chairs, wheelchair users and mobility vehicle users.

## **The Proposal**

7. The application is for an equipment cabinet to be used in the existing phone network. The cabinet is required to upgrade the broadband network on the Norwich West telephone exchange.
8. The equipment cabinet will be 1.4m tall, 0.75m wide and 0.37m deep, in a dark green colour similar to existing cabinets in the area.
9. The cabinet will be sited adjacent to the pavement with cabling running to the south west and north east to connect this cabinet to the telephone cable networks.

## **Representations Received**

10. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. No letters of representation have been received at the time of the committee report being produced. The consultation period however does not expire until 29 February and so this application has been presented to committee in case any objections are received. As this is a prior notification planning application a decision must be made within 56 days of receipt of the application. If any representations are made they will be verbally reported to committee.

## **Consultation Responses**

11. Design and Conservation and Transportation: No specific comments on proposed equipment cabinet. The proposal was discussed with the applicants at a pre-application stage and the alternative location closer to Cringleford Bridge was suggested (see paragraph 16 for outcome of alternative locations considered).
12. Tree Protection Officer: The proposed works are adjacent to trees in the highway verge. Would insist upon contractors carrying out the work in accordance with guidelines as detailed in The National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) guidelines concerning The Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees.

# **ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

## **Relevant Planning Policies**

### **Relevant National Planning Policies**

- Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering sustainable development
- Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the historic environment
- Planning Policy Guidance 8 – Telecommunications
- Planning Policy Guidance 9 - Biodiversity

## **Relevant policies of the adopted East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2008**

ENV6 – The historic environment  
ENV7 – Quality in the built environment

## **Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2011**

Policy 2 – Promoting good design

## **Relevant saved policies of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004**

NE1 – Protection of environmental assets from inappropriate development  
NE3 – Tree protection  
NE7 – Protection of locally designated sites of nature conservation interest  
HBE8 – Development in conservation areas  
HBE12 – High quality of design  
HBE20 – Telecommunications equipment  
SR3 – Development resulting in loss of open space  
TRA14 – Design of pedestrian routes and network

## **Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance**

Trees and development SPD (2007)

## **Written Ministerial Statement: 23 March 2011: Planning for Growth**

Support of enterprise and sustainable development.

## **Principle of Development**

### **Policy Considerations**

13. As this is a prior notification application the key considerations for this application are design and siting. This application is only required as the cabinet is in a conservation area. The development would otherwise be permitted development.
14. Within the considerations for siting and design the impact on the Conservation Area, surrounding trees and the natural environment will require careful consideration.

## **Design**

### **Impact on Conservation Area and River Valley**

15. The equipment cabinet would be within an area that forms the edge of the natural river valley of the River Yare and the Eaton Conservation Area. There are however existing street furniture and other utilities fixtures within the streetscene which reduces the natural appearance of this part of the designated areas to some degree. The streetlights and road signs give the area a more suburban look along with the existing equipment cabinets.
16. Investigations have been made by Openreach to relocate the cabinet further towards Cringleford Bridge near the existing cabinet they operate. This would be closer to vegetation and trees which would provide a natural screening backdrop to enable the cabinet to blend into the streetscene more. There was a water main underneath the land where this alternative location was considered and so this option was ruled out.

17. The proposed location of the cabinet will however be alongside the pavement and existing streetlights and road signs, preventing the cabinet from being an alien feature in an otherwise natural setting.
18. The cabinet would not lead to an adverse impact on the overall appearance of the streetscene and Conservation Area. The depth of the highway verge and natural screening towards the south of the proposed cabinet would enable the structure to be a minor feature in the streetscape, with the proposed colour of dark green reducing the visual impact it would have even further.

## **Siting**

### **Impact on trees**

19. The cabinet and proposed cabling to connect this to the existing network would be likely to be within the root protection areas of the adjacent street trees. The applicants have confirmed the cabling would only be dug to a shallow depth of 45cm. Given the fact there is an existing hard surfaced pavement directly adjacent to the site, it would be unlikely that tree roots would grow in the 45cm depth of soil where the cabling is proposed. The surrounding undeveloped highway verge to the east, west and south of the proposed cabinet site would be more likely to contain significant tree roots. The extent of works is not considered to lead to an adverse impact on the surrounding trees. An informative note is however recommended to identify the guidelines utility companies are bound by to protect trees.

### **Impact on River Valley and adjacent County Wildlife Site**

20. The site of the proposed cabinet is screened from the wider river valley and County Wildlife Site by the mature trees and hedges along the south of the site. The small size of the proposed cabinet and choice of colour of dark green will enable the cabinet to blend into the surrounding natural landscape in any case. The proposed cabinet is therefore not considered to have an adverse impact on the environmental quality or landscape character of the surrounding natural landscape.

### **Impact on pedestrian movement**

21. The proposed cabinet is adjacent to the pavement. It therefore does not have any impact on pedestrian movements through the area. The pavement is not subject to large numbers of people at any one time. This additional cabinet will not have an adverse impact on pedestrian movements through the site.

## **Conclusions**

22. The proposed cabinet has been carefully considered to reduce the visual impact on the Conservation Area and surrounding natural environment to the south of the site. An alternative location further towards the south west towards the existing equipment cabinet has been ruled out due to the presence of a water main under the ground. The proposed location is considered to have a minimal impact on the environmental quality and landscape character due to the presence of mature vegetation that acts as screening to the surrounding area.
23. The cabinet would be more visible within the surrounding Conservation Area, but as there are already a number of street furniture and other cabinets along the footpath in this area, this additional cabinet is not considered to be out of keeping with the surrounding character or appearance of the Conservation Area. There are not however a large enough number of items of street furniture to consider that the area would become cluttered by this additional cabinet.
24. The proposed cabinet is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with policies NE12, NE3, NE7, HBE8, HBE12, HBE20, SR3 and TRA14 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan Adopted Version November 2004, the adopted

Joint Core Strategy March 2011 and all material considerations.

### **Reason for Approval**

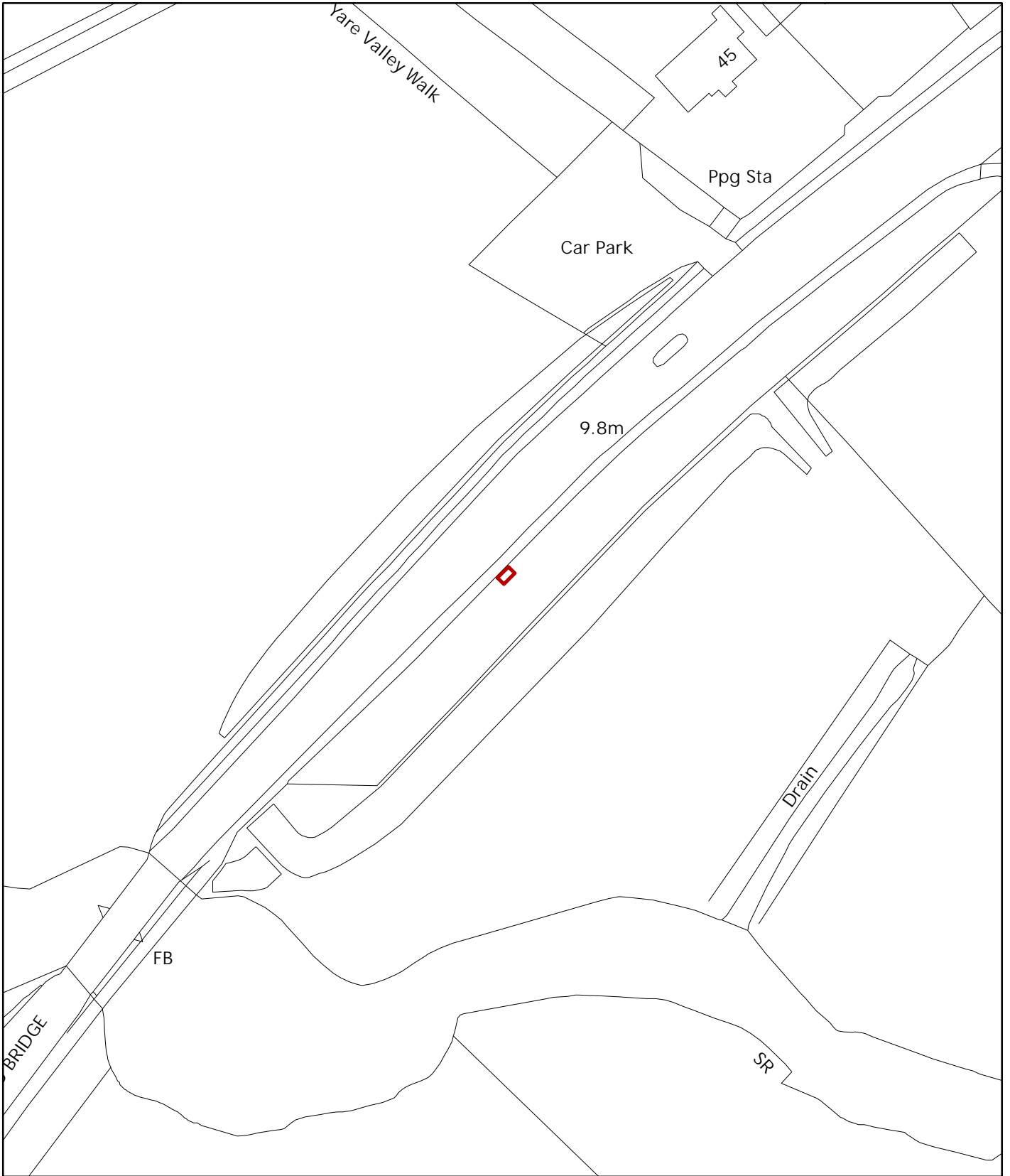
25. The decision is made with regard to policies NE12, NE3, NE7, HBE8, HBE12, HBE20, SR3 and TRA14 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan Adopted Version November 2004, the adopted Joint Core Strategy March 2011 and all material considerations. The equipment cabinet will not have an adverse impact on the visual appearance of the area, the wider Eaton Conservation Area, River Yare valley or the environmental quality or landscape character, by virtue of the siting of the cabinet adjacent to an existing pavement and street furniture and through the presence of mature screening to the wider River Yare valley to the south of the site.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To APPROVE application number 11/02232/T and GRANT PRIOR APPROVAL subject to the following informative note:

Informative Note:

(1) Operations on site shall take place in complete accordance with the guidelines as detailed in the NJUG Guidelines: The Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees.



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Planning Application No 11/02232/T

Site Address Site North East of Cringleford Bridge, Eaton Street

Scale 1:750



**NORWICH**  
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES

