

N.H.C.

17 JUN 2025

NORTHGATE

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3 MEADOW WAY
HITCHIN
SG5 2BN

Submitted by hand (due to the 3000 character limit for online comments)

NHDC PLANNING DEPT
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth
SG6 3JF

15th June 2025

Dear Sirs

Planning Application 25/01258/TD - Proposed 20m phonemast at Hawthorn Close SG5 2BP

I wish to object to the above application for the following reasons:

1. The proposed structure will have an overpowering and obtrusive visual impact in a quiet residential area comprising mainly single storey bungalows, that will affect and diminish local character as well as residential enjoyment and amenity
2. There has been totally inadequate public consultation and relevant notification for this proposal.
3. EE has not provided a proven need for such a prominent and widely visible mast
4. Such structures, although as yet unproven to be hazardous to health, generate inevitable 'risk to health' perceptions by very many people and are thus viewed as an undesirable blight, particularly in a residential landscape
5. Priory Estate Covenants agreed in/around 1955 pertaining to the planning permission agreed for construction of the Willows Estate, under which our properties are bound, citing that no prominent building/installation will be constructed that is visible from the Priory estate; why are local residents bound by such covenants and a 20m phone mast not?
6. Inevitable negative impact on desirability, saleability and thus value of properties within at least 250m of such an installation

The above points are explained in further detail below:

1. The disproportionate scale of the proposed structure will look totally incongruous and be overbearingly prominent in the local landscape which, as the Council knows, mainly comprises low level, single storey bungalows; these will be totally dwarfed by this humongous mast.

The mast will be visually intrusive for many properties on the estate and will be visible from the windows and gardens of most houses; it will inevitably adversely affect the character of the estate and the continuing enjoyment of homes and gardens all around.

2. Lack of consultation/notification: I have explained this point in detail in my cover letter submitted alongside the Local Residents' Petition. Suffice to say, the extremely limited notification given to local residents, together with a totally inadequate and poorly placed site notice (as good as non-existent) lead me to believe that NHDC Planning Department was hoping that this application might slide through almost unnoticed and without comment by the locals. Planning Department (in)actions in this respect show a clear lack of concern for the interests of local residents.

Add to this lack of notification, the inaccurate, misleading and innocent-sounding terminology employed by EE in their application (eg 'vendor swap' and 'equipment upgrade') and it makes the whole proposal appear to have been 'played down' as much as possible.

This is not a simple 'swap' as EE are suggesting in their application; the proposal is a request to replace an existing slender 9m pole - $\frac{3}{4}$ of which is street lighting in the form of a lamppost - with a behemoth more than twice the height and thickness of the existing pole, with several protruding antennas, all of which will significantly tower (by 8m - or 26 feet in 'old money' that many local residents understand more clearly) above the existing tallest treetops.

3. EE mentions in this application that the installation is partially "...in response to customer complaints" regarding signal capabilities; however, having spoken to at least 100 local residents in the past week or so, only one has mentioned an insufficient mobile signal. I should therefore very much like to see significant evidence of these 'customer complaints'?
4. Although online research would appear to suggest that there is, as yet, no proof that such mobile masts are hazardous to health, it is widely accepted that most people's general perception of such masts is 'cautious' to say the least and therefore, an installation such as this will inevitably have a negative impact on location desirability - and it inevitably goes without saying that property buyers will very likely look elsewhere to purchase where no such blight exists.
5. Priory Estate Covenants - as detailed in local deeds dating back to around 1955 when the Willows Estate was first developed and the Priory Estate wanted to ensure that no future building or structure on the new development would be visible from the Priory grounds. Since the residents are bound by such covenants, surely the siting of a humongous 20m mast must also be contrary to the covenants?
6. Installation at this site of a 20m mast will greatly diminish the character and desirability of the estate. The overbearing nature (as well as a perceived potential risk to health that many people have) of such a monstrous and overpowering installation will inevitably deter property buyers and will thus negatively impact the saleability and ultimately value of property where such blights exist.

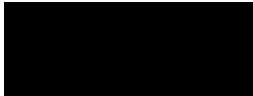
Alternative siting

I should like to know the other two original site options and why these were deemed unsuitable and withdrawn? More appropriate siting would surely be nearer to taller commercial properties, or next to industrial estates or along main roads (such as Parkway) where considerably fewer residential properties are impacted.

I understand that the substructure exists in the current location; however siting costs should not be given additional prominence when the overall proposed structure is entirely alien and incongruous within the local character and landscape; wealthy companies such as EE should be firmly encouraged to thoughtfully consider appropriate installation sites and not make the excuse that "the infrastructure exists, therefore it's convenient and financially advantageous".

Given the above reasons, I would respectfully urge the Council to give serious and careful consideration to the impact that this proposal would inevitably have on so many local residents and refuse the application.

Yours sincerely



SANDRA BIGGERSTAFF (Mrs)
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