



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2020

by Diane Cragg DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/19/3239732

Manor Castle (R95065), East Side of Manor Lane, Sheffield S2 1WU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by MBNL (EE LTD & Hutchinson 3G UK Ltd) against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02902/FULTEL, dated 30 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is telecoms upgrade. Proposed phase 8 monopole c/w wraparound cabinet at base and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. There is a separate prior approval application for a 20-metre-high monopole mast before me, appeal reference APP/J4423/W/19/3239736. The site of the mast is to the north and adjacent to this appeal site. The appellant indicates that the development of both masts is required to deal with the data demands in this location, therefore, I have taken account of the proposed adjacent mast in coming to my decision on this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Manor Lane is a through route connecting the A57 to the A6135. The appeal site is located within the footpath adjacent to a low stone wall fronting Manor Lane. The site sits between two open areas of land which I saw on my site visit are used for recreational purposes. In the wider area there is a grade II* listed building and a scheduled ancient monument. Although these two features are not mentioned in either the Council or the appellant's submissions as being impacted by the development, I take the location of these features and the interpretation board adjacent to them as evidence that the area attracts visitors. The open areas to the east and west of the appeal site also appear well used.

5. The existing telecommunications mast sits acceptably within the street scene. Although slightly higher than the street lights and wider, in longer distance views its siting and appearance is not significantly more apparent.
6. The proposed monopole mast would be wider and approximately 9 metres higher than the mast it would replace. There is limited intervening tree cover between the appeal site and Manor Park to the east. The land rises towards the appeal site and the mast, due to its height and siting, would become a prominent and dominant feature of the view towards the site. From the west the impact would be less severe, because of the land levels and tree cover. Nevertheless, considering the structure's height it would still be a significant feature of the views from this open area. Further, when approaching the appeal site along Manor Lane, being more than twice the height of the street lights and of greater width, the mast would be particularly prominent.
7. Overall, I consider that the mast would be highly visible from the adjacent open areas and would be a prominent feature when approaching the site along Manor Lane. Its size and siting would dominate the street scene and detract from the area's open and undeveloped appearance. Despite there being an existing mast, the additional height and width of the proposed structure would result in a prominent and dominant development which would be an incongruous addition to the street scene.
8. Further, the appellant indicates that in order to facilitate the increase in data demand in the area it will be necessary to install two monopoles adjacent to each other. Appeal reference APP/J4423/W/19/3239736 relates to a prior approval for a new mast of similar dimensions located a short distance to the north of the appeal site. Taken together the two masts, in the context of the open and undeveloped area, would exacerbate the prominence and dominance concerns I have identified.
9. Consequently, I conclude that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with Policy BE14 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan March 1998, which seeks to minimise the visual impact of telecommunications development.

Other Considerations

10. The Framework advises that high-quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth, and that the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology, should be supported. However, the Framework also advises that the use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability should be encouraged. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed.
11. The proposal for the mast is a result of considerable demand for data within this area and the need to facilitate 5G coverage. I recognise the economic and social importance of advanced, high quality and reliable telecommunications and the strategic role of infrastructure in supporting growth.
12. The proposal would facilitate up to 5G coverage and it would be shared by 2 operators. It would also be available to the Emergency Services Network (ESN). I also appreciate that the equipment is necessary to achieve the required standard of network coverage in the area and I have no reason to

question the appellant's evidence that the monopole's dimensions are the minimum necessary.

13. However, paragraph 115 of the Framework advises that applications for electronic communications development should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. The paragraph makes the distinction between an addition to an existing mast and a new mast. For new masts evidence that the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure has been considered should support the application whereas for the addition to an existing mast no such evidence is required.
14. In this case the appellant states that evidence of the need for this location was submitted when the original mast was approved. However, this application is for a replacement new mast (rather than an addition to it) and I have no evidence that existing buildings, masts or other structures have been considered. Given my conclusions in terms of the harm to the character and appearance of the area, I do not have sufficient information to balance the harm I have identified against any evidence of the limitation of or lack of other available sites.
15. I appreciate that the appellant sought to engage with the local planning authority and that there was no response to that consultation. However, this does not diminish the harm I have identified.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above the mast would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. In this regard it would conflict with Policy BE14 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan March 1998 which seeks to minimise the visual impact of telecommunications development. This is consistent with the objectives of the Framework.
17. As I have not been provided with evidence of the limitation of or lack of other available sites, I do not find that the locational needs of the operators outweigh the harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the area.
18. For these reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

Diane Cragg

INSPECTOR