



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2020

by Paul Cooper MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/20/3251274

Existing Mast, Stradbroke Road, Woodhouse, Sheffield S13 7JP

- 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 & H3G) against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03679/FULTEL, dated 30 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is the replacement of an existing 9.70m monopole with a 20.0m high monopole supporting 12no antenna apertures, together with the installation of ground-based equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a grassed area adjacent to the footway on the western side of Stradbroke Road. The existing site is located on the eastern side, close to the site. There are residential properties to the south and commercial premises to the north.
4. The proposed mast would replace the existing mast, and the appellants state that the update will facilitate Fifth Generation (5G) connectivity. The proposal would sit above the existing treeline and be extremely visible when seen in its context. The scale of the mast is industrial in nature and has the external appearance of a structure more often seen in commercial or industrial areas and would be harmful to the residential nature of the locality. The mast would appear dominant in the locality and be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
5. I have noted that the design of the mast is relatively slender, and the additional height is largely made up of antenna apertures. In addition, the presence of the existing mast in the locality has established a presence of such street furniture in the locality and the area is not exclusively residential in nature given the presence of commercial premises. Notwithstanding this, the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to policies BE14 and H14 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) which amongst other matters, states that telecommunications development should be sited and designed to minimise visual impact.

6. Paragraph 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that such telecommunications development is essential, and the expansion of electronic networks should be supported, including the next generation of mobile phone technology. Based on the guidance in the Framework, there would be public benefits from the proposal and that the development is a joint venture between two companies, which would reduce the need for additional masts.
7. Paragraph 115 of the Framework states that evidence must be supplied to demonstrate that alternatives have been taken into consideration. Additions to an existing mast or base station are excluded. As the proposal is a new siting (albeit a replacement for an existing mast, but in a different location), alternative sitings must be assessed.
8. Whilst a photographic site search with a 100m radius has been included with the evidence of the appellant, I have not been supplied with any details of the alternative sites that have been assessed and disregarded accordingly. Therefore, I find that the appellants have not fully justified the requirement for the siting in this location.
9. I have also noted the Council have considered the impact of the whole installation, whilst the appellants have stated that the ancillary equipment would be permitted development. Irrespective of this, I find that the ancillary equipment would not be over-prominent, due to their size and scale, and would not harm the character and appearance of the area.

Other Matters

10. I have taken into consideration the reference of the appellant to "the Councillor's guide to Digital Connectivity" which outlines the benefits of installations, but I have no evidence to demonstrate what, if any public examination it has gone through, and therefore can give it minimal weight in the appeal.
11. I have also noted the supporting decisions supplied with the Appellants Statement of Case. I have not been supplied with any further details regarding these cases, and therefore I cannot assess the locational context or impact of the proposals, and therefore can only give limited weight to them in the appeal.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

12. I acknowledge the potential economic and social benefits of the proposal, and the support demonstrated in the Framework in relation to high quality communications infrastructure. However, I do not consider that these benefits in relation to this proposal would outweigh the significant harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the area.
13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Cooper

INSPECTOR