



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 22 June 2021

by R Hitchcock BSc(Hons) DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/U4230/W/21/3271544

Ellenbrook Road, Boothstown, Worsley, Manchester, M28 1ES

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant approval required under Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by MBNL, for and on behalf of EE Limited & H3G UK Limited against the decision of Salford City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/75705/TEL56, dated 27 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 September 2020. The development proposed is the installation of a 20m Telecommunications Phase 8 monopole with wrap around cabin built round the base and 3no ground based equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and approval is granted under the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the installation of a 20m telecommunications Phase 8 monopole with wrap around cabin built round the base, and 3no ground based equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto at Ellenbrook Road, Boothstown, Worsley, Manchester, M28 1ES in accordance with the terms of application Ref 20/75705/TEL56, dated 27 July 2020 and the plans submitted with it.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal follows a decision by the Council not to grant prior approval for the siting or appearance of a development that would otherwise be permitted under Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO). The principle of the development is therefore established, and the scope of this appeal is limited to the effects of its siting and appearance.
3. For telecommunications development, the provisions of the GPDO do not require regard be had to the development plan. However, I have had regard to the saved policies of the City of Salford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) only insofar as they are a material consideration relevant to matters of siting and appearance. According to the Council, the weigh to emerging *Publication Salford Local Plan: Development Management Policies and Designations* is limited on account of potential unresolved objections and no weight has been applied to it or the Revised Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, which is no longer being progressed by the Council.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the locality

Reasons

5. The site is a small area of level mown grass lying close to the junction of East Lancashire Road (A580) with Ellenbrook Road and Newearth Road. The site lies at the eastern tip of a triangle of woodland set behind a pavement and a left filter lane from the A580 passing the truncated end of the northern length of Ellenbrook Road. The site currently accommodates a 12m high telecoms mast and 5 associated ground-based equipment cabinets. The road is lined by regular lighting columns estimated by the appellant to be 12m in height.
6. The proposal is to erect a 5G capable mast with an overall height estimated at 20m. In addition, the installation of 4 new cabinets, including one about the base of the mast, and the removal of an existing cabinet which would become redundant, are proposed. The equipment would be colour finished in grey.
7. In the vicinity of the site, the main road corridor benefits from a high degree of mature tree coverage providing screening to primarily residential areas to either side. This is also true of the junction area close to the site where houses and The Woodside public house are well screened by vegetation.
8. In consequence, the site is primarily seen in the context of the main road corridor. In views along the road, the proposed set back position would make best use of the existing tree cover which would either screen a large part of the lower section of the pole or provide a backdrop to it.
9. The proposed siting would also ensure that direct views of the mast would be largely obscured from nearby residential properties and the pub by the density of the intervening vegetation. This would be so even during months of the year when most would have naked branches. Furthermore, the colour treatment would assimilate with the existing pole and streetlights such that it would have some visual integration into the road corridor and minimise the visual effects of the upper part of the mast when viewed against the sky.
10. At 20m the mast would be significantly higher than the existing monopole and streetlights. It would also be taller than the majority of trees within the adjacent woodland and those fronting onto the nearby junction. However, the scale would be largely tempered by the width of the road corridor and the spacious open area about the junction. Although the structure would have a degree of prominence, this would be more limited than other examples of masts along the A580 – particularly those with broad-frame headsets or those sited immediately adjacent to the carriageway.
11. The scheme shows the retention of the existing 12m mast, which may become redundant. The appellant advises that the demand arising from increased homeworking during the pandemic and other sources would require the initial consecutive use of both masts. It highlights that should the original mast become redundant then a specification under the GPDO would require its removal. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the increased demand for mobile services in the locality, or the necessity to future-proof services, could be met solely by the proposed mast. This could lead to the permanent retention of both structures.

12. In the absence of any undertaking to remove it following the installation and commissioning of the new monopole, the masts would be seen in tandem. Combined with the increased number of cabinets, the close siting of the masts would create a degree of clutter that would contrast with the well-spaced and characteristic arrangement of highway structures visible in the context of the road corridor. As such the siting and appearance of the proposal would lead to a minor conflict with the prevailing character of development in the locality.

Other considerations

13. Paragraph 112 of the Framework sets out the Government's objectives for communications infrastructure. It states that: *Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.*
14. In support of the appeal, the appellant highlights that the proposal would provide for next generation 5G coverage in the locality which would deliver a range of social, economic and environmental benefits derived from increased data capacities, transfer speeds and the improvement of bandwidths. It could also accommodate 'smart' applications and use by emergency services.
15. Amongst other things, this could enable significant improvements for private and business users, and facilitate connectivity, innovation, efficiency and user security. It could contribute to the expansion of home working to assist in the reduction of travel requirements. Furthermore, the mast would facilitate use by more than one operator to avoid a proliferation of masts dedicated to individual providers. These are matters that weigh in favour of the development.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

16. I have found that the mast would cause some harm to the character and appearance of the immediate locality. This would result in a minor conflict with the requirements of saved Policies DES1 and DEV1 of the UDP and Policy TEL2 of the Salford City Council SPD [2013] as they seek to protect the character and visual amenity of places.
17. However, when weighed against the potential public benefits arising from the proposal, I conclude that the minor harm identified would be outweighed in the particular circumstances of the case. For the reasons given, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed subject to the standard conditions set out in Paragraph A.2 to Part 16 of the GPDO.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR