



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2022

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A2280/W/21/3279567

Land at Elizabeth Way Roundabout, Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8EN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and 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 Hutchinson UK Ltd against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01385/PRI16A, dated 19 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is a 15 metre Phase 8 Monopole C/W wraparound Cabinet at base and associated ancillary works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and prior approval is granted under the provisions of Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the erection of a 15 metre Phase 8 Monopole C/W wraparound Cabinet at base and associated ancillary works on Land at Elizabeth Way Roundabout, Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8EN, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/01385/PRI16A, dated 19 March 2021.

Preliminary Matter

2. The height of the proposed monopole was reduced from 20 to 15 metres during the course of the application. The description of the application has been amended accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The proposal is permitted development under Part 16 Class A of the 2015 Order but prior approval is required for its siting and appearance under paragraph A.3(3). The main issue is therefore the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the effect on the Riverside and Stourbridge Common Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The proposal is for a 15 metre slimline monopole with associated ground level cabinets on the footway outside the National Tyres and Autocare Garage on the north-western side of the Elizabeth Way roundabout. The selected design is the simplest suitable for the site and the height is the minimum necessary to avoid interference and provide the required operational performance.

5. The appellant is in the process of building an upgraded 5G telecommunications network and requires a new mast site in the Newmarket Road area to meet increasing demand. It is not possible to upgrade an existing mast site to meet this need and there are no opportunities for site sharing available. The Council does not dispute the need for a monopole but argues that the site is unsuitable as it lies within the Riverside and Stourbridge Common CA. The CA includes the densely developed area of 19th century terraced housing between Newmarket Road and the River Cam both to the east and west of Elizabeth Way, but also the large scale roundabout which was built in the 1970s.
6. The monopole would be clearly seen by road users next to the busy roundabout and would be both thicker and about 3 m taller than the 12 m high streetlights which are spaced around it, one a few metres away. The monopole would therefore join a range of existing street furniture which the CA appraisal describes as a poor-quality jumble; it would also be located in front of a rather utilitarian garage building in more of a commercial rather than residential setting. However, in this unremarkable, ordinary streetscape an increasingly ubiquitous monopole structure would not look out of place. For the same reason the monopole would not detract from the character and appearance of this very small and unrepresentative part of the CA.
7. The CA includes the River Cam frontage and two sections of terraced housing to the north of Newmarket Road. However, lying on the southern edge of the CA, the monopole would not be visible from these critical areas. In particular, the five storey Brunswick House behind the garage would screen the monopole from the river and the river end of Walnut Tree Avenue while the streets lined with terraced housing provide visual enclosure. The alignment of Newmarket Road would prevent views of the monopole when walking from the direction of Maids Causeway and from the east it would be seen in the context of the roundabout. Only the rear elevations of the houses on Abbey Road obliquely face the site apart from No 4 which looks across the roundabout.
8. The heritage harm would therefore be negligible and clearly outweighed by the public economic and social benefits of digital infrastructure which is strongly supported by government policy. The seven alternative sites considered along Newmarket Road, East Road and Elizabeth Way would be more intrusive. The Council do not put forward any preferred sites nor raise objection to the grey colour proposed which would match the nearby streetlights. There are no highway objections to the installation which would not obstruct pedestrian movements. The installation would meet ICNIRP health guidelines.
9. For these reasons the proposed monopole would not significantly detract from the character and appearance of the area, nor the Riverside and Stourbridge Common CA. It would thus comply with Policies 84 and 65 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 which aim to minimise the visual impact of telecommunications development and avoid 'visual pollution' in the public realm.

Conclusion

10. Having regard to the above the appeal should be allowed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR