



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2022

by Paul Martinson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/21/3284797

Fulwood Sports Club, Chorley Road, Sheffield S10 3RL

- 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 & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by MBNL against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03647/TEL, dated 20 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 20.0m monopole on root foundation with associated equipment cabinets and ancillary works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Consistent with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (GPDO), under Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A, Paragraph A.3(4) I have assessed the proposal on the basis of its siting and appearance.

Planning Policy

3. The principle of development is established by the GPDO and the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO do not require regard be had to the development plan. I have nevertheless had regard to the policies of the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) only in so far as they are material to matters of siting and appearance.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is an area of land on the edge of the Fulwood Sports Club that lies between the tennis courts and the highway. A loose hedge, incorporating trees, forms the boundary of the appeal site with the highway. Chorley Road is reasonably narrow at this point and slopes down past the site. Chorley Drive, another residential street slopes down towards the junction with Chorley Road opposite the appeal site. Both streets have mature trees lining both sides of the road and the area has an overwhelmingly residential and suburban

character despite the presence of the Sports Club. Dwellings tend to be reasonably large although predominantly limited to two storeys in height.

6. Street furniture here is limited, although the floodlights within the grounds of the Sports Club are prominent vertical structures and measure around 10 metres high¹. There are small highway poles and lighting columns bounding the edge of the pavement along Chorley Road and Chorley Drive, although these tend to be obscured in longer views due to the prevalence of taller mature trees, which have a maximum height of about 14 metres² in the vicinity of the appeal site.
7. It is proposed to install a monopole mast to a height of 20 metres and site associated equipment cabinets adjacent to the hedge. Despite the height of the adjacent floodlights, the proposed height of the monopole mast at 20 metres would mean that it would become the tallest structure in the vicinity by a considerable margin. Due to its height, it would appear vastly out of scale with its low level residential surroundings and would consequently appear as a prominent and incongruous addition to the streetscene in views along Chorley Road and on the approach to the junction with that road from Chorley Drive. In both instances the narrowness of the road would exacerbate the dominance of the structure.
8. The adjacent presence of the prominent floodlights would only serve to emphasise the dominance of the proposal on its surroundings given that it would extend to roughly twice their height with a greater width. The structure would be significantly taller than the nearby trees and would not be comparable in scale with any nearby street furniture. Whilst the hedge and trees would provide some low level screening when in leaf, any screening would be extremely limited outside of this time period.
9. I have had regard to the support in the Framework for high quality communications and infrastructure. However, I must balance this against the Framework's aim for equipment to be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate, as well as the Framework's encouragement of development to achieve well-designed places for the long term.
10. I have taken into account that this is a proposal for two providers to share a mast, and that this installation could also potentially be used by the Emergency Services. However, whilst the appellant refers to an impending hole in 5G coverage I have not been provided with compelling evidence of the existing level of coverage, and its likely future reduction, in this particular location. Nonetheless, the need for this installation weighs in favour of the appeal and it appears that, following the 'notice to quit' in respect of the installation at Fulwood House and the refusal of an earlier application at a different site, the need for additional capacity is pressing. However, I am in no doubt that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, particularly as a result of the scale of the proposal and its dominance on its surroundings.
11. I accept that the appellant has undertaken an assessment of potential alternatives, notwithstanding that it appears only four other locations nearby have been considered, a relatively limited selection. Two appear to have been

¹ Based on Plan Ref: 1544714_SHF272_76638_S0925_M004 Issue D

² Based on Plan Ref: 1544714_SHF272_76638_S0925_M004 Issue D

discounted on lack of communication from the relevant landowner alone, rather than with reference to potential planning implications. Furthermore, none of these options include sharing existing installations. I am therefore not convinced that less harmful alternatives have been properly explored and it is my overall view that the need for the installation does not in this case, outweigh the harm.

12. I conclude that the siting and appearance of the proposed monopole would be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the area and that the harm identified would not be outweighed by the need for that installation. The proposal would be contrary to Policy BE14 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) (UDP) which states that new telecommunications development should be sited and designed to minimise its visual impact, with new equipment being sited on existing structures where feasible. There would also be conflict with Policies CS74 (c), (e), (d iii) and (h) of the Sheffield Core Strategy (2009) and Policy H14 (l) of the UDP which, amongst other things, seek to ensure new development is of an appropriate design and scale, that preserves the character and appearance of the area.
13. Similarly, there would be conflict with Paragraph 115 of the Framework which requires new telecommunications sites to be sympathetically designed and camouflaged, where appropriate. There would also be conflict with Paragraph 130 of the Framework which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure new developments add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Martinson

INSPECTOR