



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2022

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/W/22/3295136

Dropmore Road, Burnham, Buckinghamshire, SL1 8EJ, 493089, 183470

- 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 CK Hutchison Networks (UK) Ltd against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref PL/21/3245/RM, dated 6 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 7 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as "15.0m Phase 8 Monopole C/W wrapround Cabinet at base and associated ancillary works".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The principle of the proposed development is established in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (the GPDO). The GPDO requires that prior approval applications for telecommunications development under Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A be determined having regard to the siting and appearance of the development.
3. The GPDO does not require that regard be had to the development plan in determining telecommunications prior approval applications. I have therefore had regard to the policies identified by the Council only insofar as they relate to matters of siting and appearance.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and, if harm would result from the proposed development, whether that harm would be outweighed by the need for it.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a verge at the junction of two roads just outside Burnham. The row of houses on one side of Dropmore Road continues for a distance along Dorney Wood Road to one side of the junction, while there is a field on the other side of the road. There is a tall evergreen hedge enclosing No 100, which has frontages onto both roads. There are several particularly tall trees within the garden of No 100 along the Dorney Wood Road frontage. The proposed installation would be set along the Dropmore Road frontage, with the evergreen hedge to its rear.

6. The mast would be significantly taller than any other piece of street furniture in the surrounding area, including streetlights and telegraph poles. While not as tall as the tallest trees in the grounds of No 100, it would be visually separated from those trees in views along Dropmore Road in both directions. It would consequently be both a prominent and incongruous feature as a very tall artificial element in a street scene characterised mainly by trees and hedgerows, most of which are lower than the proposed mast.
7. The development would deliver improved coverage in this location, including supporting the rollout of 5G service. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) acknowledges both the economic and social benefits of advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure. The mast would be the lowest height required to provide 5G service in the area. The requirements of 5G service mean that new installations are necessary, and the appellants have not been able to identify an appropriate alternative location.
8. The Council has recognised in its submissions that an appropriate green colour finish to the equipment would soften the visual impact of the mast and cabinets. However, even if the installation were finished in an appropriate colour, it would still be a dominant and incongruous presence in the street scene. The Framework states that equipment on new telecommunications sites should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate. The harm to the character and appearance of the area that would arise from the proposed development is such that it would not be outweighed by the need for it in this location.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons set out above, the appeal fails.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR