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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 December 2023

**by Paul Cooper MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 15 January 2024**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/23/3320521**

**Land at Warminster Road Substation, Warminster Road, Sheffield S8 9BN**

- 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 Cornerstone Limited against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
  - The application Ref 22/03232/TEL, dated 1 September, was refused by notice dated 25 October 2022.
  - The development proposed is the installation of a telecommunications base station comprising a 17.5 m high column, 3no. antennas, associated GPS module, 1no. equipment cabinet, 1no. meter cabinet and ancillary works
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. The provisions of the Order under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A, Paragraph A.3(4) require the local planning authority to assess the proposed development solely on the basis of its siting and appearance, taking into account any representations received. My determination of this appeal has been made on the same basis.
3. The principle of development is established by the Order, and the provisions therein do not require regard be had to the development plan. I have had regard to the policies of the development plan, any related guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) only in so far as they are a material consideration relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

### Main Issue

4. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

5. The development is close to the entrance to the electrical substation and is located adjacent to a predominately residential area. An existing shared operator mast is located in close proximity that cannot be updated which is to be retained and this mast would meet the requirements of one of the operators for future needs. There would be some screening from existing landscaping features. There are also streetlights and some signage in the locality.
6. Paragraph 114 of 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.

7. Paragraph 117 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, alternative siting's must be assessed. Information has been supplied as evidence to show that this has been carried out, but I am not convinced that has been carried out to an acceptable level.
8. In this case, the appellant's evidence demonstrates that there is a need for a new mast in the area, in order to cater for the forecast rapid increase in demand for mobile services in the future. In accordance with the advice at paragraph 118 of the Framework, the Council does not question the need for improved coverage.
9. The appellants state that the proposed mast would facilitate Fifth Generation (5G) connectivity. The proposal would be easily visible and tower above the existing surroundings when seen in its context. Although it could be argued that the mast is a slim, unfussy design, it would be considerably taller than any of the nearby street furniture and trees, whilst the utilitarian appearance would not fit well into this pleasant environment.
10. The scale of the mast is strident, industrial in nature and has the external appearance of a structure more often seen in industrial areas and would be harmful to the local context of residential development. The mast would appear dominant in the locality and be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, magnified by the retention of the existing mast.
11. From closer viewpoints, the entire structure would be visible. It would be an unattractive and dominating feature. The scale and design of the installation would be incongruous in this setting. Consequently, regardless of the colour finish that could be used on the equipment, I conclude that the siting and appearance of the proposal would significantly harm the street scene and the character and appearance of the area.
12. The Framework recognises that planning decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks and the appellant has provided evidence to justify the proposed development. However, I have found the siting and appearance of the development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area, which is not outweighed by these other considerations. I find the proposal to be in conflict with the design and setting aspirations set out in paragraph 130 of the Framework.

### **Planning Balance and Conclusion**

13. I have taken into account the economic and social benefits of the proposal, and the supporting documentation provided that demonstrate the merits of an effective communications network. Nonetheless, I do not find these benefits outweigh the harm that would be generated by the siting of the mast and associated works in such a location.

14. For the reasons set out, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

*Paul Cooper*

INSPECTOR