



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 April 2025

by J Hobbs MRTPI MCD BSc (hons)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/W/24/3356367

Anfield Ambulance Station, Liverpool L6 4BX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) 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 EE UK Ltd and Hutchison UK Ltd against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24PT/2466.
 - The development proposed was originally described as "NTQ Proposed telecommunications installation. Proposed telecommunications installation. Proposed 25m high Valmont climbable monopole on 5.8 x 5.8 x 1.4m deep concrete base with Config 1 circular headframe for 6No. antenna apertures & future 4No. 600Ø dishes. RRUs & BOBs to be fixed to headframe below antennas and associated ancillary works."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The provisions of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (the GPDO), 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 provisions of Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO do not require regard be had to the development plan. I have had regard to the policies contained within the Liverpool Local Plan 2013-2033, January 2022 (LP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) only in so far as they are material considerations relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are (i) the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation on the character and appearance of the area, including its effect on trees; and (ii) if any harm would occur whether this is outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed considering any suitable alternatives.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The proposed installation would be sited within Anfield Ambulance Station. The ambulance station is utilitarian in appearance and is bound by a large brick wall and tall metal palisade fencing. Although a school and medical centre adjoin the ambulance station, the surrounding area is characterised by dense residential development.
6. The ambulance station is accessed via Lower Breck Road and Belmont Grove. This section of Lower Breck Road is tree-lined and there is a pocket of dense mature vegetation within the grounds of the medical centre on Belmont Grove. Therefore, the surrounding vegetation partially screens the ambulance station and provides a verdant quality to the area around the appeal site.
7. Whilst the proposed installation would be of a height necessary to improve the network coverage across the area, it would be very tall. The existing trees and ambulance station buildings would partially screen the proposed installation at the lower levels. Notwithstanding this, it would be significantly taller than nearby street furniture, buildings, and trees. Consequently, it would be very prominent in the street scene, as shown within the submitted visualisations, particularly from Lower Breck Road.
8. The appellant has sought to design the proposed installation to be as discreet as possible but still accommodate multiple users and has sought to site it away from residential properties. Nonetheless, the proposed installation would have a substantial massing and despite being in the grounds of the ambulance station it would be within a predominantly residential area. Accordingly, the proposed installation would appear as a very large piece of infrastructure which would be incongruous to the appearance and residential character of the area. The harm caused to the appearance and character of the area, would be amplified by the proposed installation's prominence.
9. The proposed installation would be sited toward the middle of the ambulance station away from the tall trees surrounding it. However, the proposed installation would be in proximity to a tree located within the station. To comply with LP Policy GI9, a tree survey, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, and an Arboricultural Method Statement should have been submitted with the appeal. However, as above, LP policies are only material considerations in this case. The tree is small and is isolated from others surrounding the station. Even if the proposal led to the removal of this tree, it would not be harmful to the verdant quality of the surrounding area.
10. A Notice to Quit has been served on the existing installation near to the appeal site. As such, the proposal would not lead to a net increase in the number of installations. Nevertheless, the proposed installation would be taller than the existing installation and would be in a more prominent location near to Lower Breck Road. Consequently, the removal of the existing installation would not offset the harm that would be caused by the proposal or set a precedent for the appeal proposal.
11. Due to the proposed cabinets' height and massing, alongside their siting within the middle of the ambulance station, views of them would be largely screened from

public areas. The cabinets would be bound by security fencing and would assimilate with the utilitarian appearance of other buildings and structures within the ambulance station. Consequently, no harm would arise from the siting and appearance of the proposed cabinets.

12. Given the above, the proposal would not be in accordance with LP policies H7, and UD1 where they advise permission will be granted where there is no impact on the character of the area, and proposals should demonstrate that the scale and height of development has been considered. It would also be contrary to paragraph 120 of the Framework where it indicates that equipment should be sympathetically designed.
13. I conclude that the siting and appearance of the proposed installation would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, but not on nearby trees.

Need for siting

14. As above, a Notice to Quit has been served on an existing installation in the area, to facilitate the redevelopment of that site. It is not disputed that the proposed installation is required to maintain and improve digital wireless and mobile coverage within the L6 area of Liverpool. The appellant has also provided compelling evidence outlining why improved coverage is necessary and in accordance with Government priorities. LP Policy STP4 also supports applications for new infrastructure where they are required to deliver national priorities. Furthermore, the proposed installation would be supported by paragraph 119 of the Framework where it advises that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing.
15. Nonetheless, paragraph 122 of the Framework requires proposals to be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development, including considering the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast, or other structure. The appellant has identified that it would not be possible to site the proposed installation on an existing building or structure, and that there are no other licenced operations where equipment could be housed, within the area. 9 locations for potential new installations have been considered; the appellant has concluded that all 9 are unsuitable for several reasons.
16. Proposed Location D1 is the Top Tiles' car park, this was dismissed as the proposed installation would remove too many parking spaces and would impede on the functioning of the business. It is not clear how many spaces would be removed, as a minimum. Moreover, no evidence has been submitted explaining how and why the loss of some parking spaces would impede the ongoing functioning of the business.
17. Proposed Location D9 is the Larch Lea Industrial Estate. This was dismissed as the appellant concluded that there appears to be no space for a large telecom compound. There are several roadside locations within the industrial estate where it may be possible to site a large telecom compound. The Council has also highlighted a couple of these locations within the Case Officer Report, and this has not been addressed within the appellant's evidence.

18. Consequently, it has not been sufficiently demonstrated that proposed locations D1 and D9 could not accommodate the proposed installation. Whilst the need for the proposed installation within the local area has been established, it has not been demonstrated that it would need to be sited as proposed considering potential suitable alternatives.

Other Matters

19. Despite mentioning a balancing assessment within the first reason for refusal, the Council were not required to conduct a balancing assessment on the proposed social and economic benefits against the identified harm. The GPDO requires the local planning authority to assess the proposed development solely on the basis of its siting and appearance. Notwithstanding this, I have had some considerations of the benefits when assessing the need for the proposed installation to be sited within the local area.

Conclusion

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

J Hobbs

INSPECTOR