



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 June 2025

by **L Wilson BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/25/3360305

Grass Verge off Uppergate Road, Stannington, Bradfield, Sheffield S6 6BX

- 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 Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Limited against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01886/TEL.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. 17.5m tower to host 6no. antennas alongside ancillary works both to the tower and base.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and 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 siting and appearance of the installation of 1no. 17.5m tower to host 6no. antennas alongside ancillary works both to the tower and base at land at Grass Verge off Uppergate Road, Stannington, Bradfield, Sheffield S6 6BX in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 24/01886/TEL, and the plans submitted with it including 100 Rev A (Site Location Maps), 201 Rev B (Site Layout Proposed), and 301 Rev B (Proposed North-West Elevation).

Preliminary Matters

2. The provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (GPDO), 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 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 had regard to the policies of the development plan¹ and the Framework² only in so far as they are a material consideration relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

¹ Including Policies BE14, BE15, BE17, BE18 and H14 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) and Policy CS74 of the Sheffield Development Framework: Core Strategy (2009)

² Including paragraphs 120 and 135

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation on the character and appearance of the area and, if any harm would occur, whether this is outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed taking into account any suitable alternatives.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site consists of a grass verge opposite Stannington Infant school. There is a single-storey library towards the east, an area of open space towards the south, and towards the west are two-storey dwellings. The site is at the edge of an Area of Special Character and close to the locally listed Knowle Top Chapel. The design of the scheme is dictated by technical constraints and the appellant asserts that a lesser mast height would not provide adequate coverage or capacity.
6. Given the open space towards the rear of the site and distance to nearby buildings, the proposal would be sited within an open section of the streetscene. The monopole would also be taller than the nearby buildings and street furniture. Thus, the installation would be a prominent and obtrusive feature which would appear out of scale and character in the streetscene, and would detract from the Area of Special Character. Having said that, there are mature trees nearby and the open space towards the rear rises, which would help to reduce the prominence of the proposal from longer distance views. Based on the evidence presented and given the intervening built development, and separation distance, the proposal would have a neutral impact on the significance of Knowle Top Chapel.
7. In relation to this main issue, the appellant has drawn my attention to appeal decisions to demonstrate that Inspectors have found that street furniture base station developments have a functional appearance, typical of telecommunications equipment seen in urban areas generally. Whilst I do not dispute these findings, that does not outweigh the harm I have found. They have also highlighted further allowed appeals. However, the specific characteristics of the appeal sites cannot be directly compared, and I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits.
8. For the reasons set out above, due to its siting and appearance, the proposed installation would cause localised harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Suitable alternatives

9. Chapter 10 of the Framework supports high quality communications. Paragraph 122 sets out that applications, such as that proposed, should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. For a new mast or base station, this includes evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure.
10. The appellant sets out reasons why the appeal site is the most viable option in terms of balancing planning and operational considerations. In addition, they have highlighted appeal decisions. However, the specific information detailing alternative sites are not directly comparable.

11. The Council has not put forward any alternative sites. Instead in relation to this matter they have referred to a refused application (which was subsequently dismissed at appeal).
12. A local resident has questioned the quality of the potential sites information, and the reasons given. In addition, residents have suggested an alternative site by the recycling bins north of Stannington Park Pavilion. Other objectors have stated that there are more appropriate sites available but have not put forward any. The appellant acknowledges the error in their report. They highlight that the suggested site was considered and set out valid reasons to explain why it was discounted.
13. I have had regard to the Site Specific Supplementary Information which details the discounted options and why they were rejected in favour of the appeal proposal. The reasons given include due to a legal issue, planning history, not fulfil operational brief, greater impact on residential and visual amenity including on heritage assets and greater visibility. The appellant has provided clear and persuasive evidence to justify why the other sites have been discounted. Thus, based on the evidence provided, a thorough review of possible options has been carried out and there are no realistic alternatives. Consequently, I conclude that the localised harm to the character and appearance of the area would be outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed given the lack of suitable alternatives.

Other Matters

14. Concerns have been raised about potential effects on health (particularly concerning children attending the infant school, local residents, and users of the play area and park). However, the appellant has provided a certificate to confirm that the proposal has been designed to comply with the guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). In these circumstances, the Framework advises that health safeguards are not something which a decision-maker should determine. No sufficiently authoritative evidence has been provided to indicate that the ICNIRP guidelines would not be complied with or that a departure from national policy would be justified.
15. In addition, concerns have been raised relating to house prices, similar applications and dismissed appeal, highway safety, and the location blocks further development of the park frontage, entrance and library area. Similarly, concern that the proposal would restrict the ability to extend the library building.
16. Any effect of the proposal on property values is not a matter for me to consider as the planning system operates in the public interest and does not seek to protect private interests. The matters relating to restricting future development would not justify withholding prior approval. In addition, whilst I acknowledge there have been similar applications, I must determine the appeal scheme on its own merits, including the alternative sites evidence. Furthermore, I am satisfied, based on the evidence provided and my site visit observations, that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
17. The Council did not refuse the application on the concerns raised within the other matters. There is no credible evidence before me that would lead me to an alternative conclusion to the Council on the other matters raised, or that could justify the dismissal of the appeal on these grounds.

Conditions

18. The Council and appellant have suggested conditions, including the coloured finish of the installation. However, the Order does not provide any specific authority for imposing additional conditions beyond the deemed conditions for development by electronic communications code operators contained within it. These specify that the development must be carried out in accordance with the details submitted with the application, begin within 5 years of the date of the approval and be removed as soon as reasonably practicable after it is no longer required for electronic communications purposes and the land restored to its condition before the development took place.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed and prior approval should be granted.

L Wilson

INSPECTOR