



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025 by J Reed MPlan

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/G4240/W/25/3367629

Grassed verge of Lancaster Road, Denton, Manchester M34 7JP

- 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 & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Cornerstone against the decision of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 25/00155/NCD, dated 15 April 2025 was refused by notice dated 15 April 2025.
 - The development proposed is described as 'The proposal comprises the installation of 20m high monopole supporting 6 no. antennas, 2 no. transmission dishes, 2 no. equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto including Ericson Radio Systems (ERSs).'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The provisions of the aforementioned legislation requires an assessment of a given proposal solely on the basis of its siting and appearance. The Council has referred to development plan policies. However, the principle of development is established by the GPDO regard is not required to be had to the development plan. I have therefore referred to the policies as far as they are a material consideration relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

Main Issue

4. The main issues are the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and, if any harm would occur, whether this would be outweighed by the need to site the installation in the proposed location, having regard to the availability of alternative sites.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal site is a grassed area adjacent Lancaster Road and opposite the junction with Aylesbury Avenue. The surrounding area is mainly residential and is characterised by two storey properties. To the north of the site is an open playing field. There are numerous trees, street lighting columns, telegraph poles and low level street furniture lining Lancaster Road and the surrounding area. This lends a

consistency of small to medium scale to the area which contributes positively to its character and appearance.

6. Whilst a slimline pole has been specified, given its significant height and lack of shrouding for the antennas, it would result in a utilitarian appearance which would be at odds with the domestic character of the surrounding area. The monopole would be dramatically taller than the surrounding street lights, telegraph poles and trees which would exacerbate its prominence. It would also be noticeably higher than nearby buildings. The width of the monopole and the antennas would also be wider than nearby street lights. The proposed height of the pole is required in order to provide the coverage needed. However, given its siting in a prominent location it would appear as a dominant structure which would be highly incongruous when viewed from the surrounding public realm.
7. Whilst there are numerous trees surrounding the appeal site these are not mature and would provide limited screening for the proposal at the lower level of the structure at best. The appellant also indicates that the colour of the proposal can be specified as deemed appropriate, however this would not sufficiently mitigate the adverse impact of the proposed monopole, which would arise chiefly as a result of its siting and height.
8. The proposal would include two additional ground based equipment cabinets alongside it. Whilst the cabinets would introduce street clutter on a stretch of pavement currently free of furniture, these would have a much lesser impact due to their limited number and size. There is an existing telecommunications monopole in the vicinity of the appeal site. However, this is a relatively slender and innocuous installation. It does not appear overly obtrusive and sits relatively comfortably with the streetlighting columns in the area.
9. For the above reasons, the siting and appearance of the proposal would be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area by standing out as an out of scale addition, adversely affecting the area's consistency of much smaller scale features in the built and natural environment. I have taken into account Policies C1 and U2 of the Tameside Unitary Development Plan 2004 which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development conserves and enhances the built environment, and that the siting and appearance of apparatus has been designed to minimise its visual impact.

Alternative Sites

10. Applications for telecommunications development should be supported with the necessary evidence to justify the proposal. A sequential approach has been used by the appellant in their site selection. It is stated there are no suitable buildings or site sharing opportunities within the intended cell area that would be capable of accommodating the proposed installation.
11. The main reasons for discounting the alternatives provided include reference in vague terms to the presence of overhead pylon wires; insufficient pavement width; proximity to residential properties; distance to public open space and visibility splay issues. There is little detail on how the search for alternative sites was carried out or how sites were selected for further consideration. Consequently, the assessment of alternative sites lacks sufficient detail, and the scheme before me is also close to residential properties and directly adjacent an area of community open space. No sufficiently substantive evidence has been provided to show that adverse impacts

would take place or that locations within the identified alternative sites could not host an installation. Whilst I note that the search area used is highly constrained, there is insufficient evidence before me to demonstrate that the appeal site is the least harmful option available.

Other Matters

12. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) outlines the significance of high-quality telecommunications infrastructure including in relation to being essential for economic growth and social well-being. The Framework also suggests that masts and sites should be kept to a minimum.
13. I have been referred to a number of previous appeal decisions where monopolies have been allowed. I note that a balancing exercise should be carried out and the need to provide additional telecommunications coverage within the locality, and the Government's support for telecommunications infrastructure, are essential parts of that exercise. However, and in this instance, I do not consider that the operational and locational needs of the operator outweigh the significant harm I have identified from the siting of the monopoly in this particular location. The site is not within an area with a statutory designation for a particular protection such as for heritage or ecological purposes, but the lack of harm to such does not sufficiently weigh in favour of the proposal to overcome the harm I have identified.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

14. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing. Planning decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology, such as 5G according to the Framework. I have had regard to the benefits of the proposal, including its contribution to the delivery of sustainability and an upgrade to digital telecommunications allowing for additional coverage and capacity, including the introduction of 5G technology to the area. This weighs in the proposal's favour.
15. However, on the basis of the evidence before me it has not been demonstrated that the appeal site is the best available option for minimising the effect of the development. Therefore, and notwithstanding the need for the proposed installation and the benefits which would arise from it, the harm to the character and appearance of the area would not be outweighed by the need to site the installation in the location proposed. I therefore recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

J Reed

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR