



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2025

by **Andreea Spataru BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N4205/W/25/3372081

Beatrice Street, Farnworth, Bolton BL4 7DG

- 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 & Hutchison 3G UK Ltd against the decision of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 20091/25.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Proposed telecommunications installation. Proposed Valmont 20m High Phase 7 MK2 Streetworks Pole on Root Foundation, 2No. GPS Nodes, 9No. Apertures, 2No. 300mmØ Dishes, 6 No. Cabinets and associated ancillary works.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal site's address above has been taken from the appeal form and the Council's decision notice, rather than the application form, as it is more precise.

Background and Main Issues

3. 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 representation received. My determination of this appeal has been made on the same basis.
4. 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 to be had to the development plan. I have therefore had regard to the policies of the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) only insofar as they are a material consideration relevant to matters of siting and appearance.
5. Social and economic benefits have been raised, as well as various references to how the roll out of such development is supported by Government. However, the GPDO is clear that the only considerations should be siting and appearance. Those benefits have effectively been recognised by the grant of permission under Article 3(1) of the GPDO. 'Precedents' made by other such installations that have been the subject of appeals¹ similarly fall outside of what can be considered under the GPDO.

¹ Appeal refs: APP/L1765/W/18/3197522 & APP/N5090/W/20/3261084

6. Accordingly, the main issues are the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation on (i) the character and appearance of the area; (ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of 21 Beatrice Street and those of 166, 168, 170 Harrowby Street by way of outlook; and (iii) 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

7. The Framework states that the number of masts and sites for telecommunication installations should be kept to a minimum and that the use of existing masts, buildings and other structures should be encouraged. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.
8. The appeal site occupies a section of pavement on Beatrice Street, adjacent to a park and opposite residential properties. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with bungalows fronting Beatrice Street and two-storey dwellings on Harrowby Street. Mature trees are a defining feature of the street, contributing to its verdant character. Apart from several street lighting columns, vertical structures are limited, and the street scene is generally uncluttered.
9. The proposed mast, due to its height and bulk, would be a highly conspicuous addition to Beatrice Street. Its scale would sharply contrast with the modest bungalows and other nearby structures, making it visually dominant. The cluster of antenna apertures and dishes at the top of the monopole would further accentuate its prominence, appearing incongruous within the context of surrounding development. Furthermore, the associated equipment cabinets would introduce additional visual clutter to an otherwise open and orderly street scene.
10. The submitted plans illustrate the proposal's impact from various viewpoints. While the adjacent trees would provide some screening and soften views from certain angles, the monopole would rise above the established tree canopy. Consequently, its presence would be particularly intrusive when viewed from Beatrice Street and Sutherland Grove, where the bungalows are located.
11. For these reasons, I conclude that the siting and appearance of the proposed installation would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Living conditions

12. The proposed mast and associated equipment cabinets would be positioned opposite 21 Beatrice Street, a residential bungalow. Although the mast would not directly face the front windows, it would be clearly visible from them and significantly affect the outlook from the property's frontage. This visual intrusion would result in a harmful impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of 21 Beatrice Street with regard to outlook.
13. Properties 166, 168 and 170 Harrowby Street front Harrowby Street, and their rear elevations face towards the side of 21 Beatrice Street. No 170, located on the corner of Harrowby Street and Beatrice Street, has no habitable windows on the side elevation facing Beatrice Street. Consequently, views of the proposed

installation from these dwellings would be oblique and limited, reducing its effect on their outlook. Therefore, the proposal would not materially harm the living conditions of the occupants of these properties.

14. I conclude that the siting and appearance of the proposed installation would have an unacceptable effect on the living conditions of the occupants of 21 Beatrice Street by way of outlook.

Need for the Proposed Installation in this Location and Alternative Sites

15. The proposal seeks to replace an existing installation following the issue of a Notice to Quit. The appellant contends that the only viable solution is the erection of a new ground-based mast, arguing that this approach would provide the most effective coverage for the operator's network requirements.
16. The appellant's evidence refers to several discounted alternatives, citing constraints such as insufficient pavement width, proximity to residential properties, lack of space for a telecoms compound, or the unsuitability of a certain structure type for a specific location.
17. However, the submitted evidence does not demonstrate a comprehensive assessment of alternative options. There is no clear explanation as to why a Greenfield-type structure at Dixon Green Reservoir would be inappropriate, nor why that location could not accommodate a more sympathetic design, such as the options suggested by the Council in the form of a shrouded monopole or a telecoms tree. Similarly, little consideration appears to have been given to opportunities involving land or buildings in private ownership, or to whether a network solution comprising a greater number of smaller, less visually intrusive installations, potentially integrated with existing street lighting infrastructure as suggested by the Council, could achieve the required coverage. This lack of detailed analysis indicates that the appellant has not fully explored less harmful alternatives before selecting the proposed site and design.

Balancing Exercise and Conclusion

18. The siting and appearance of the proposed installation would result in unacceptable effects with regard to both the character and appearance of the area, and on the living conditions of the occupiers of 21 Beatrice Street by way of outlook. On the other hand, it has been ably demonstrated there is a need for the proposed installation in this area and the benefits this would afford. This is due to the loss of the current site and the geographical coverage that would result.
19. The likelihood that a more suitable site may be reasonably available cannot however be discounted for the reasons set out above. As such, the need for the proposed installation in this location and alternative sites does not outweigh the harm that would arise to character and appearance and living conditions.
20. In conclusion, the proposal fails against the prior approval matters of siting and appearance, as are set out by paragraph A.3 (4). As a result, it would not satisfy the requirements of Class A of Schedule 2, Part 16 of the GPDO and, therefore, is not permitted development by it. For these reasons, the appeal should be dismissed.

Andreea Spataru INSPECTOR