



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2025

by **C Mayes CMLI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/25/3374522

Land at Stannington Road, Wisewood, Sheffield S6 5FT

- 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 Cornerstone against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01101/TEL.
 - The development proposed is installation of a telecommunications base station comprising a 17.50m monopole supporting 6 no. antennas and 1 no. dish together with 3 no. ground based equipment cabinets, 1 no. meter cabinet, and ancillary development thereto.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and prior 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 installation of a telecommunications base station comprising a 17.50m monopole supporting 6 no. antennas and 1 no. dish together with 3 no. ground based equipment cabinets, 1 no. meter cabinet, and ancillary development thereto at land at Stannington Road, Wisewood, Sheffield S6 5FT in accordance with the application ref: 25/01101/TEL and the details submitted with it including plan nos: Site Location Maps Drawing Number 100 Rev B, Existing Site Plan Drawing Number 200 Rev A, Proposed Site Plan Drawing Number 201 Rev B, Existing Site Elevation A Drawing Number 300 rev A, and Proposed Site Elevation A Drawing Number 301 Rev A.

Preliminary Matters

2. Because this is an application for prior approval the provisions of the 2015 Order 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. This appeal will be determined on the same basis.
3. 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 had regard to Policies BE14 and H14 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan, 1998 (UDP), Policy CS74 of the Sheffield Development Framework Core Strategy, 2009, and the National Planning Policy Framework only as far as they are material considerations relevant to matters of siting and appearance.
4. The details set out in the header and decision paragraph above are taken from the application form as I have not been made aware there was agreement by the appellant to make any changes to them.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation on the character and appearance of the area and, 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

6. The appeal site lies within an area identified as having 'special character' in the UDP. While this designation carries limited weight, it is nonetheless a material consideration in assessing the effect of the proposal on character and appearance. I have not been provided with any specific evidence or explanation as to what constitutes that special character in this instance.
7. However, the character and appearance of the area are defined by its predominantly residential nature, with modest two-storey stone-built houses forming a consistent and traditional streetscape. Buildings are generally set back from the road, and the use of local materials reinforces the established identity of the locality. Street furniture is limited to a small number of repeated elements, such as lighting columns and telegraph poles, all of which are of a similar scale and appearance. The allotments, situated adjacent to appeal site, provide a generous break in the built form and contribute to the spacious quality of this part of Stannington Road. Taken together, these features underpin the 'special character' of the area, as referenced by the Council, and form an important part of its distinctive sense of place.
8. The openness of this part of the street, together with the rising topography, means that any structure in this location is highly visible from a range of public viewpoints. The appeal site is situated at the back of the footway on the northern side of Stannington Road, opposite the junction with Low Road. Notably, the footway at this point is itself separated from the carriageway by a grass verge, which provides a degree of separation from the road and contributes to the open character of this part of the street.
9. While telecommunications infrastructure is now a common feature in many urban and suburban environments, this is not the case in the immediate context of the appeal site. Here, such infrastructure does not form a repeated or established element of the street scene. The proposed monopole, at 17.5 metres in height, would be substantially taller than other vertical features in the vicinity. Unlike the existing lighting columns and telegraph poles, which are repeated elements and contribute to a consistent pattern within the street scene, the monopole would be seen in stark isolation.
10. Although the design of the monopole represents the slimmest and least obtrusive option available to the operator, and the proposed siting avoids being directly overlooked from residential properties, the development would still appear visually intrusive and disconnected from the established residential character and pattern of street furniture. The lack of a backdrop or meaningful screening would further accentuate its prominence, causing it to stand out as an incongruous feature that is out of scale with its surroundings.

11. Taking the above into account, the proposed scheme would be substantially taller than other vertical features in the vicinity, and its bulk, combined with the associated cabinets, would result in a development that appears visually intrusive at odds with the area's special character. The lack of a backdrop or meaningful screening would further accentuate its prominence, causing it to stand out as an incongruous feature that is out of scale with its surroundings. Therefore, I conclude that the siting and appearance of the proposed installation would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Need for the proposed installation and alternative sites

12. The supporting submissions detail the operational need for the proposed development and a specific requirement for a new radio base station in this location following the planned removal of operational equipment from an existing site. I am advised that the existing site cannot be reused or upgraded to meet current technical requirements, particularly for 5G provision, due to physical and operational constraints, and I have been provided with no reason to question this.
13. Replacement of the existing infrastructure will enable the operator to provide improved 2G, 4G and 5G connectivity to this part of the city and ensure that residents and businesses do not suffer from loss of connectivity, while meeting the extra demand in the area. These considerations weigh heavily in favour of the proposal and reflect national objectives for high-quality communications infrastructure.
14. Furthermore, the appellant has demonstrated a thorough sequential approach to site selection, with alternative sites considered and discounted for technical or operational reasons. The lack of alternative sites is not contested by the Council, and I find no reason to disagree with these conclusions. The lack of alternative options to deliver improved coverage and capacity within the required area is a consideration which also weighs strongly in favour of the appeal.

Other Matters

15. Reference has been made to various social and economic benefits but these have not been taken into account in considering the matters of siting and appearance
16. Concerns have been raised about potential effects on health. 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 NPPF 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.
17. I note that the proposed installation would narrow the footway to approximately 1.2 metres, which falls below the minimum width of 1.5 metres recommended in industry guidance. While this reduction is less than ideal and represents a negative aspect of the scheme, I am satisfied that it would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway or pedestrian safety. This is principally due to the presence of a grass verge between the footway and the carriageway, which provides additional separation and mitigates potential risks to pedestrians. Notwithstanding the concerns raised regarding outlook from residential properties on Stannington Road,

I am not persuaded that an unacceptable effect would result to public amenity, even if this can be deemed to fall within what can be considered for a prior approval application. The effect on property values is not a planning matter and so is not for my consideration.

Balancing Exercise

18. The siting and appearance of the proposed installation would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. However, it has been demonstrated that there is a compelling operational need for the installation in this location and that no suitable alternative sites are available. On balance, I find that the public benefits of improved connectivity and the lack of reasonable alternatives outweigh the identified harm. The proposal thus succeeds against the prior approval matters of siting and appearance, as set out by paragraph A.3(4) of the GPDO. Hence, it would satisfy the requirements of Class A of Schedule 2, Part 16 of the GPDO and so is development permitted by it.

Conditions

19. 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

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

C Mayes

INSPECTOR