



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 January 2026

by Mr R Walker BA HONS DIPTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/25/3372994

Claremont Hospital, 401 Sandygate Road, Sheffield S10 5UB

- 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 Ltd and Hutchison 3G UK Ltd against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
- The application Ref is 25/01949/TEL.
- The development proposed is Proposed 25.0m high Valmont monopole mounted on 5.8x5.8x1.4m deep reinforced concrete base c/w 6No proposed antenna apertures and 4No proposed Ø600 dishes. Proposed EE 2No unilateral cabinets on tower base (behind). Proposed H3G unilateral cabinet on tower base. Proposed EE/H3G MK5B Link/AC cabinet on separate concrete base. Paving flags to front and side to provide safe and level access, and associated ancillary works.

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 (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 based on 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 this does not require regard to be given to the development plan. I have had regard to those policies of the development plan provided by the Council, and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) only in so far as they are a material consideration relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed installation on the character and appearance of the surrounding area including having regard to the setting of the Ranmoor Conservation 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

5. The appeal site forms part of the grounds of a hospital along Sandygate Road. This part of the road is predominantly characterised by a mixture of residential

properties, though there are other uses including the hospital, and sports facilities. To the south of the appeal site lies a large embankment with numerous maturing trees and the Ranmoor Conservation Area (CA). In so far as it relates to this appeal the significance of the CA derives in part from its verdant leafy character with properties set in spacious grounds.

6. The appeal site forms part of the modest grassed grounds of the hospital. Seating is placed on terraces overlooking the grounds and the trees in and beyond the grounds, providing an attractive verdant intimate amenity space. The verdant qualities of the appeal site and the embankment make a small contribution to the setting of the CA, and thus its significance as a designated heritage asset, with views looking up toward the embankment evident from within the CA.
7. Within the grassed amenity space, the monopole and the associated works would be a highly dominant feature and its size and utilitarian nature would detract from the intimate verdant qualities of the attractive amenity space when viewed from the hospital and the external seating area and grounds.
8. In addition, the proposed monopole would be highly visible from, amongst other places, the hospital car park, Sandygate Road and Snaithing Lane in the CA. Its design, with its greater bulk on top of the slender monopole, in combination with its height rising above the trees and hospital building, would be a dominant and intrusive feature. In this regard, the proposal would also erode the contribution that the appeal site's verdant setting makes to the significance of the CA.
9. Telecommunication equipment are not unusual in urban areas but for the reasons set out the proposal would be a visually intrusive feature in this location. The GPDO does not provide any specific authority for imposing additional conditions beyond the deemed conditions for development by electronic communications code operators. In this regard, I have only considered the colour proposed rather than any alternatives as suggested by the appellants.
10. The proposed monopole and associated infrastructure would be located near the existing tree within the grounds and those beyond the grounds to the south. Although it is put to me that the scheme would accord with guidelines for installations near trees, no site-specific evidence is before me to demonstrate that this would be the case. Given the location of the trees, and their size, without such evidence I am not persuaded that they would not be adversely affected. Considering the contribution, they make to the character and appearance of the area, and the setting and thus the significance of the CA, this adds to my concerns.
11. To conclude on this aspect of the main issue, the siting and appearance of the proposed installation would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area including having regard to the setting of the CA. I consider that the harm to the significance of the CA to be at the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm. Nevertheless, this harmful impact is a matter of great weight. The Framework advises that this less than substantial harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.
12. I have no reason to question the appellant's evidence regarding the general need for improvements in the area. However, the Designated Search Area, which has guided the site selection is not clearly defined in mapping and there are no colour-coded signal maps, which can be helpful in establishing an 'area of search'.

13. I'm told that the proposal is a replacement for telecommunication equipment, which the Council say is 1.25km away, but the submission provides broad statements around a 250m cell radius. The lack of clarity on the Designated Search Area means it is unclear what criteria was used to guide the selection of alternative sites. The Council have also suggested that no evidence was submitted to demonstrate that the appellants explored the possibility of erecting antennas on the existing hospital roof building.
14. These matters were raised by the Council in their Officer's report and based on the evidence before me and having regard to paragraph 122 of the Framework, I agree. Moreover, where sites have been discounted the extent of the reasons provided for these other sites being discounted is very brief and lacking in detail. For example, the Hallamshire Golf Club has been discounted as it is said there is no space for a ground mounted installation but there appears to be no consideration to a roof mounted installation on the flat roof of the building. Moreover, some sites have been discounted for a single line about being not suitable from a technical perspective with no details provided to quantify.
15. I recognise that the Council did not provide feedback when asked prior to the submission of the application which may have assisted in site selection. Nonetheless, the search and assessment of alternative sites is not sufficiently robust and based on the information provided there is insufficient evidence that other possibilities have been adequately explored.
16. The proposal would involve more than one network and would maintain and upgrade digital connectivity within the area. The government is committed to supporting the deployment of next-generation mobile infrastructure and the Framework recognises the range of social and economic benefits associated with high quality and reliable communications infrastructure. These benefits potentially carry significant weight for the appeal scheme. However, it has not been demonstrated that the only way of securing these public benefits is via the particular proposal and location before me. Accordingly, clear and convincing justification for the harm that would occur to the significance of the designated heritage asset because of the proposal, has not been provided.
17. Drawing the above together, the weight that I ascribe to the public benefits that would result from the proposal, would not be sufficient to outweigh the great weight that I attach to the harm I have identified. As such, the harm I have identified is not outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed.

Other Matters

18. The appellants have referred me to two other appeals¹. However, full details of those schemes including the evidence submitted and their location are not before me. From the evidence that is before me, they do not share the same locational characteristics as the appeal scheme in its location near trees, within the setting of the CA. In this regard, the balance of considerations in those appeals can be distinguished and I have made my own assessment of the appeal scheme based on the evidence before me.

¹ APP/L1765/W/18/3197522 and APP/N5090/W/20/3261084

Conclusion

19. The siting and appearance of the proposed installation would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area including having regard to the setting of the CA. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that the harm I have identified is outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed, having regard to any suitable alternatives.
20. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Mr R Walker

INSPECTOR