

REPORT 4

APPLICATION NO. P06/E1338/T56
APPLICATION TYPE TELECOMS 56 DAY
REGISTERED 19.12.2006
PARISH HENLEY-ON-THAMES
WARD MEMBER(S) Mr Ken Arlett
Mrs Gillian Zakss
APPLICANT T Mobile Ltd
SITE Chilterns End, Greys Road Henley-on-Thames
PROPOSAL Installation of 14.7m high streetworks monopole with associated equipment cabinets.
AMENDMENTS None
GRID REFERENCE 475189/181712
OFFICER Mr T Steward

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This proposal for telecommunications equipment is brought before the Planning Committee at the request of Mr Arlett.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 An application for prior approval is different from an application for full planning permission in that the operator has permitted development rights to install this size of equipment. The Local Planning Authority has 56 days within which to assess the appropriateness of the siting and appearance of the proposal and these are the only matters that can be considered. In this case prior approval is sought in relation to the erection of a 14.7 metre high streetworks monopole with adjacent equipment cabin.

2.2

The site is located to the west of Henley-on-Thames within a residential area and is situated on part of the adopted highway, adjacent to an isolated cluster of trees at the junction of Chilterns End Close with Greys Road. The site is not located within a designated landscape area. A site plan is **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.3

Previously approval was granted on appeal in 2001 for a 14.9m monopole proposal in exactly the same position as this proposal. This approval lapsed in January 2006.

2.4

As before the proposed new base station is in connection with the provision of Third Generation coverage to the Greys Road area of Henley. The plans accompanying the application are **attached** in Appendix 2.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Henley-on-Thames Town Council
OCC (Highways)
- Object due to the application being unneighbourly, obtrusive and out of character with the area. It is also in very close proximity to a respite centre for children and a school.
No objection.
- Environmental Health
Neighbours
- Radio frequency levels from this proposed development should be kept below ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure.
7 letters all objecting to the proposal. The following is a summary of the main points raised: health issues – there is no complete proof that masts cause no harm to health; this is a residential area; proximity of Valley Road Primary School within 200m; respite centre for children 80m away; near residential home for old people; more parents will drive children to school; area hardly in need of another mast; why hasn't this already been erected having had planning permission previously; what about site near Henley Scout Hut; unsightly and out of keeping; eyesore; traffic obstruction due to sight line at junction; will de-value our house; will be attractive to vandals.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 P00/S0266/TG – Siting and appearance of a 14.9m high ultra-slim monopole mast with single tri-sector antenna and one equipment cabinet allowed on appeal.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 5.1 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies TE1 and G2

South Oxfordshire Design Guide

PPG8: Telecommunications

Circular 4/99: Planning for Telecommunications

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The main issue for consideration in this case is whether the siting and appearance of the proposal will result in visual intrusion or have a significant adverse effect on the street scene or the amenities of the area. Only where there is significant harm to

visual amenity can the refusal to approve these matters be justified. PPG8 also requires operators to provide evidence of consideration of alternative sites prior to seeking approval of a new mast and this matter is considered first.

Alternative sites

6.2

Detailed information has been provided to the Council including the search area for the mast, the coverage plots and sites which have been investigated. It is recognised that there are limited options in this area of Henley for new masts given the relatively dense residential nature of the area.

6.3

On the basis of the pre-application discussions and further information submitted as part of the application, officers consider that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that a comprehensive evaluation of alternative sites has been carried out. It is also accepted that the alternative sites identified are either non-viable or do not constitute preferable locations to the one being proposed.

6.4 Visual intrusion

The proposed microcell is 14.7m high (this height includes both the column and antenna) and is situated within a residential area, 190m from the nearest school, which is Valley Road School.

6.5

The proposed mast would be set back from the pavement and would not provide a highway obstacle. It is positioned to the rear of a grass verge near to a phone box, with a 10m high street lighting column and an advertisement sign in close proximity. The mast would be set against a backdrop of trees that range in heights between approximately 8m and 18m in height.

6.6

The site is mainly residential in character but is positioned close to a crossroads and a small local shopping centre containing shops, some business units and a car park.

This would provide two benefits. Firstly, this location already has street lighting columns and other nearby street furniture which would make the mast less conspicuous. Secondly the location marks the beginning of an attractive tree lined residential area to the west, and this site is able to take advantage of a dense backdrop of trees which would soften the impact of the proposal. In determining the previous appeal, the Inspector commented that, "a main road location, close to a local shopping centre, is a reasonably good site for this proposed telecommunications

6.7 mast".

It is a fact that the proposal is almost identical to that previously allowed on appeal as part of application P00/S0266/TG. It is in the same position, of almost the same height but with a slightly different design which officers consider is no more or less intrusive than the previously permitted scheme. The design remains slimline with an antenna on top but this is enclosed in a plastic casement and would be finished in midnight green to minimise visual impact in the street scene.

The proposed cabinet would measure 1.3m by 0.6m and 0.35m and would also be coloured in midnight green. It would be sited by the mast and would be reasonably inconspicuous, set immediately adjacent to dense vegetation. As such officers consider that the visual impact of the mast and equipment cabin in the street scene would not be overly intrusive.

In terms of the impact on neighbours the microcell would be positioned 23m from the nearest house at 253 Greys Road and would be sited opposite 251 – 257 Greys Road. The design of the mast is simple, unobtrusive and slender and its materials, colour and design would make it reasonably discrete. The trees which act as a backdrop to the proposal would help to soften the impact of the proposal as viewed from these houses and minimise visual intrusion. In view of the distance of the mast from the properties and the backdrop of trees officers consider that it would not appear overbearing or unduly intrusive to these properties. As such the proposal would not be significantly harmful to local amenities.

A key concern expressed by local residents, particularly those in Chiltern End Close, relates to the perceived health effects of the mobile phone mast and its inappropriateness in a residential area, near to a school and a centre for children with disabilities. It is acknowledged that applications of this nature can cause considerable local distress, particularly where they are located in residential areas. Government advice, however, directs that where a proposal is shown to be ICNIRP compliant, it is not for the Local Planning Authority to consider the health effects of a proposal. The Inspector considering the previous application concludes by emphasising this point in his appeal statement. In this case, the applicants have confirmed that the mast would be ICNIRP compliant and have supported this by detailed background information.

Hence health aspects cannot substantiate a reason for refusal.

7.1

CONCLUSION

The proposal falls within permitted development right limitations and as such the only matters for consideration are the appropriateness of the siting and appearance of the mast and cabinet. Your officers have concluded that the proposal has been sited and designed to minimise visual intrusion and would not result in a significant adverse impact

on the amenities of the area.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 That the siting and appearance be approved subject to the following conditions.

- 1. Commencement 3 years.**
- 2. Details of finish to mast and equipment cabinet to be submitted.**
- 3. Equipment to be removed within 3 months if no longer required for telecommunications purposes.**

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