
2023/0209

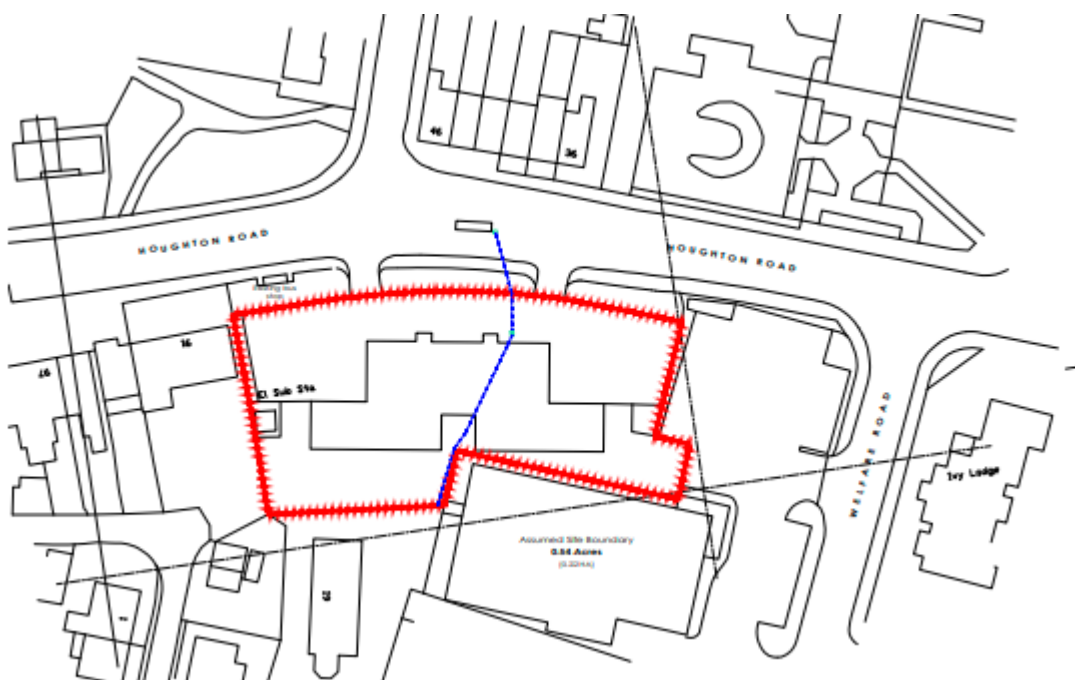
MBNL

Replacement of the existing telecommunications rooftop installation with a 20m 'streetworks' designed mast with 12 antennas and 6 ground based antennas within a secure compound

The Thurnscoe Hotel, Telecommunications Station Orange, Houghton Road, Thurnscoe

Description and background to the development

The site is set within the allocated Local Centre of Thurnscoe which provides shopping and local facilities. The location for the proposed telecommunications monopole and equipment is set, within the curtilage of, and to the side of the former Thurnscoe Hotel and Public House which is now derelict. There is a small terrace row of residential and commercial uses on the opposite side of Houghton Road from the Hotel and ASDA supermarket directly behind. Elsewhere the surroundings are a mix of residential and commercial.

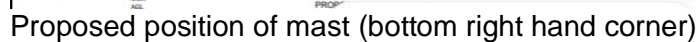


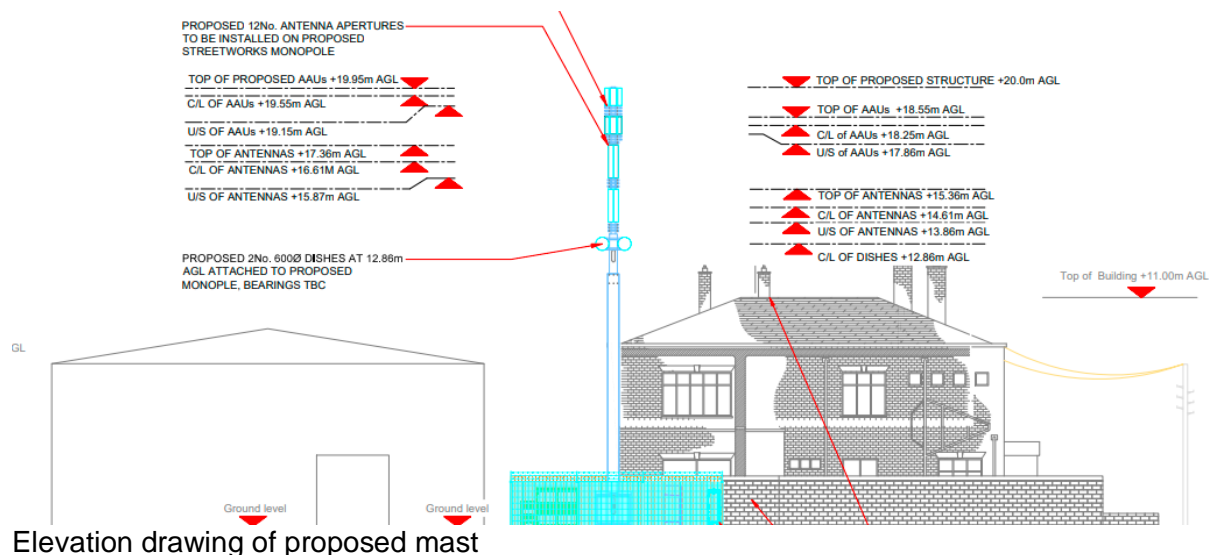
A planning application 2021/0104 has been approved for the redevelopment of the site into a new petrol station with jet washes (sui generis) and retail units (class E). This has not been implemented as yet but due to the poor and deteriorating state of the building an Enforcement Notice has also been served to demolish the building. However, existing telecommunications apparatus exist on the building and as such this application aims to replace that apparatus with a stand alone telecommunications monopole to allow the demolition works to take place.

A previous planning application for a 20m high telecommunications mast closer to the road and adjacent to 91 Houghton Road was refused under planning application 2021/1619 due to its height and positioning resulting in a discordant feature in the streetscene. This was also dismissed at appeal.

An aerial photograph of the Thurnscoe Hotel site. The hotel building is a large, multi-story structure with a grey roof. To the left of the hotel is a parking lot with several cars. To the right is a larger parking lot with many cars. A red arrow points to a location on the street to the left of the hotel, labeled "Site of refused app 2021/1419". A black arrow points to the hotel building, labeled "Thurnscoe Hotel". An orange arrow points to a location on the street to the right of the hotel, labeled "Site of current app 2023/0209". A green arrow points to a location on the street to the right of the hotel, labeled "ASDA".

The applicant has submitted a full planning application for the erection of a 20m high telecommunications monopole, 12no. antennas, equipment cabinets and associated ancillary development to replace existing rooftop installation on the adjacent hotel. The proposal is to be sited adjacent to the south-eastern corner of the former Thurnscoe Hotel building.





Elevation drawing of proposed mast

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is also now accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment and mixed-use sites). In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies and are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting held 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances, require it.

Local Plan

The site is allocated as Urban Fabric within the Local Plan Proposals Maps and therefore the following policies are relevant:

Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making
 Policy GD1 General Development
 Poll1: Pollution Control and Protection
 T4: New Development and Transport Safety

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Sections of relevance to this application are as follows:

Section 10 – Supporting high quality communications of the NPPF, paragraph 114 states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G0 and full fibre broadband connections.

Paragraph 115 goes on to state that the number of electronic communications masts, and the site for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

Paragraph 118 states that Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure

Consultations

Highways – No objections raised subject to imposition of informatives.

Pollution Control – No comments received

Ward Councillors – No comments received

Representations

Neighbour notification letters have been sent to surrounding properties and the application has been advertised by the way of a site notice. No comments have been received.

Assessment

The NPPF actively promotes the growth of telecommunication infrastructure as it is recognised as being essential to promoting sustainable economic growth and enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

The location for the proposed telecommunications monopole is set adjacent to the former Goldthorpe Hotel site which is currently derelict and has planning permission to be redeveloped for use as a petrol station. The installation would replace a rooftop mast set on top of the roof to the Goldthorpe Hotel site, which is to be demolished as part of the proposal.

Streetview showing existing telecommunications installations on roof of building

It is acknowledged that a replacement for the rooftop installation is needed given the previous planning approval and subsequent enforcement notice. The requirement for a replacement telecommunications installation in this location is therefore justified, subject to its impact upon, residential amenity, visual amenity and highway safety, which are considered below.

Residential Amenity

The surrounding area is a mix of residential and commercial properties, with the nearest dwellings located at least 30m away. Although the replacement mast will be a tall structure it is unlikely to have any significant detrimental effect in terms of overshadowing or overbearing. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

Visual Amenity

The prominent siting and appearance of the mast were the main reason why the previous application (2021/1619) was refused and dismissed at appeal. The previous siting was close to the road and would be easily seen from traffic and pedestrians heading along Houghton Road. The revised siting is now approximately 30m back from Houghton Road, closer to where the existing telecommunications apparatus are on the building, and backing onto the Asda store roof. It is therefore acknowledged that it is in a less sensitive position and relates better to the positioning of the existing apparatus and will therefore not be as prominent a feature in the street scene compared to the previous application.

The height of the mast will be the same as the previous proposal and the applicant has justified this by stating the following:

“The proposal has been designed with the aim of achieving a balance between minimising visual impact and achieving the technical requirements needed by the operator to urgently maintain the network as the existing building is close to collapse due to fire damage and will need to be razed.

It is necessary for the height of the structure to ensure that coverage can be replicated, interference is avoided and the proposal can include the latest technologies so as to not require an additional site in the vicinity, please note whilst the total height is 20m, the deployment of a ‘streetworks’ styled mast means all antennas are stacked to reduce visual impact and so the antenna height starts at just below 14m AGL, the minimum height available to the proposal.

The proposed development provides a solution to replace the existing site and therefore the existing coverage will be maintained and the technology will be upgraded to provide 5G.”

Whilst it is appreciated that the proposal has been designed as one of the thinner options for such 5G telecommunications monopoles, the monopole is still a large structure at 20m in height. There are other vertical elements within the street scene such as lampposts, the proposed pole would exceed the height of these. However, having been set back from the road by 30m the mast would be less prominent on the Houghton Road streetscene compared to the previous refusal. There are also other factors to take into account which are:

- The government's changes to permitted development rights in March 2022. As part of the ministerial statement accompanying this change it stated that “We also want citizens, businesses and public services to get the maximum benefits from 5G, which will bring faster, more responsive, more reliable connections than ever before.” The changes relaxed the height limits for masts allowing greater heights to be permissible under the permitted development regulations and prior approval procedures.
- The existing hotel building is in a state of disrepair and is subject to an enforcement notice to be demolished. Without an alternative provision for the telecommunications apparatus there is the risk that the building remains standing for longer, appearing as an eyesore and attracting anti-social behaviour, or it is demolished and the apparatus is not adequately replaced and business and the public suffer from a lack of service.
- No objections from the public or consultees

The siting of the mast is considered acceptable and its slimline appearance is also considered acceptable. It would be preferable to have the height a few metres less but the applicant has stated it is needed at this height to take on all the equipment, meet 5G capabilities, and prevent the need for any other masts or installations in the area. As commented by the Inspector on the previous decision, the main impact is on the immediate area rather than long distance views. In this respect the siting of the mast back 30m from the road reduces its impact on the streetscene where existing 12 to 15m high streetlights are in existence on the roadside. From an eyeline level it is therefore unlikely that a reduction in height by a few metres would make a significant difference. On balance it is considered that the revised siting, has overcome the previous concerns and the proposed siting, design and appearance of the mast are acceptable.

Highway Safety

The Highways Officer has been consulted on the application and stated the following:

“The installation does not interact or interface with the adjacent public highway and therefore there are no objections to the proposal from a highways perspective.”

Given the above the siting and appearance of the proposal is not considered to be of detriment to highway safety. The highways officer has asked for a number of informatives

Recommendation

Prior approval required and granted