

Applicant: Cellnex UK Ltd

Replacement of the existing 22m monopole and open antenna headframe with a new shared 25m monopole with open antenna headframes and associated works including upgraded sector antennas along with ancillary antenna support apparatus, replacement transmission dishes, upgrading of existing ground-based radio housing equipment, the installation of cabling and associated development (Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed telecommunications installation)

Address: Land at Ardsley House Hotel Site, Doncaster Road, Ardsley, Barnsley, S71 5EH

Site Description

The application relates to the upgrading of an existing 22m high monopole with an open antenna headframe above and associated ancillary equipment. The site is located to the South Eastern corner of the former Ardsley House Hotel site which has relatively recently been demolished and the site redeveloped for housing. There are 2 storey dwellings located immediately adjacent to the site to the North West on Squires Gardens. To the East and North East of the site is Ardsley crematorium and its associated grounds and to the South is the vehicular exit route from the crematorium car park to Doncaster road. The access road runs through a treebelt with a number of trees immediately adjacent to the mast. The land level slopes down quite steeply from the site to the South.



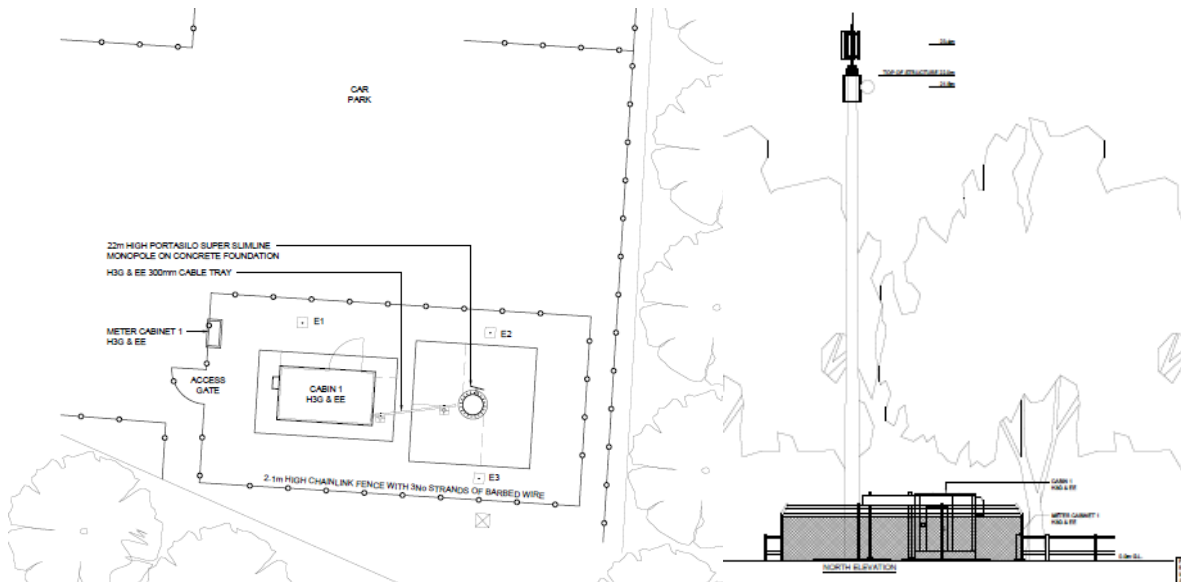
Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking prior approval for the erection and installation for the following:

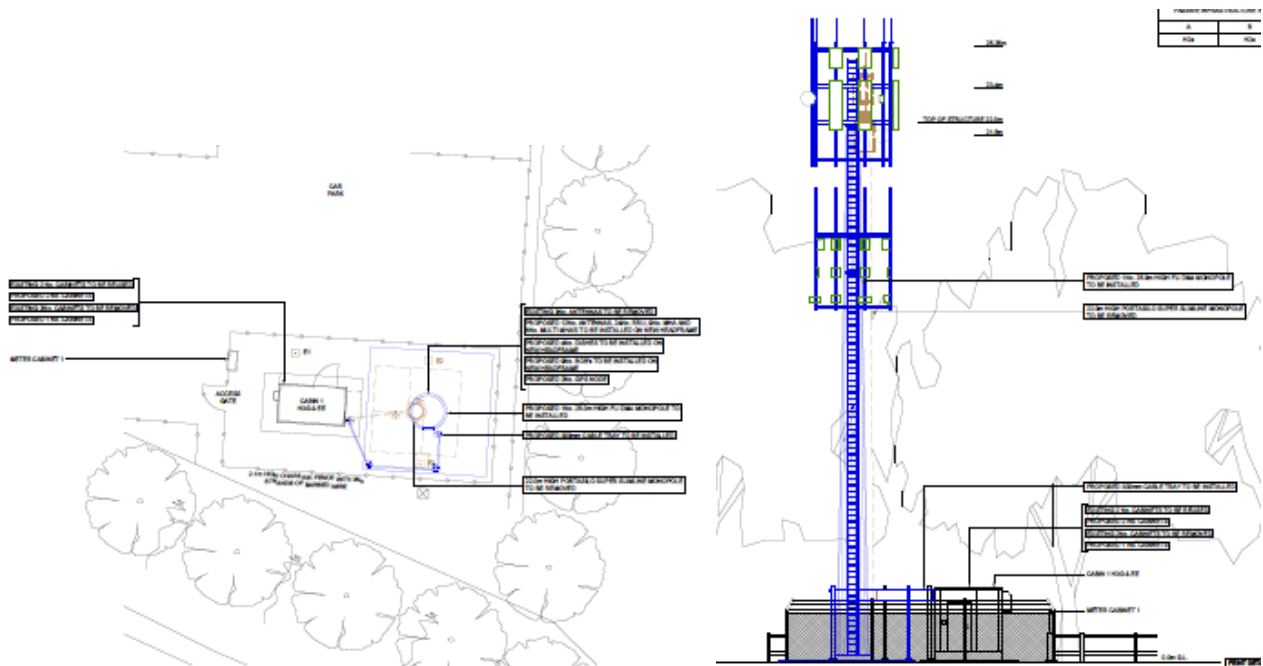
- Replacement of the existing 22m monopole and open antenna headframe with a new shared 25m monopole with open antenna headframes
- The installation of upgraded sector antennas along with ancillary antenna support apparatus
- The installation of upgraded replacement transmission dishes along with ancillary support apparatus
- The upgrading of existing ground-based radio housing equipment within an existing cabin

- The installation of cabling and associated development

Existing



Proposed



Policy Context

Local Plan

The site is located in the Urban Fabric.

Policy D1 Design

Policy GD1 General Development

NPPF

The paragraphs below are extracted from Chapter 10 'Supporting High Quality Communications' of the National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019):

112. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of

electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).

113. 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.

114. Local planning authorities should not impose a ban on new electronic communications development in certain areas, impose blanket Article 4 directions over a wide area or a wide range of electronic communications development, or insist on minimum distances between new electronic communications development and existing development. They should ensure that:

- a) they have evidence to demonstrate that electronic communications infrastructure is not expected to cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest; and
- b) they have considered the possibility of the construction of new buildings or other structures interfering with broadcast and electronic communications services.

115. Applications for electronic communications development (including applications for prior approval under the General Permitted Development Order) should be supported by the necessary evidence to justify the proposed development. This should include:

- a) the outcome of consultations with organisations with an interest in the proposed development, in particular with the relevant body where a mast is to be installed near a school or college, or within a statutory safeguarding zone surrounding an aerodrome, technical site or military explosives storage area; and
- b) for an addition to an existing mast or base station, a statement that self-certifies that the cumulative exposure, when operational, will not exceed International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection; or
- c) for a new mast or base station, evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure and a statement that self-certifies that, when operational, International Commission guidelines will be met.

116. 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 objection. Highways have advised that contact should be made with the Authorities Network Management Team prior to works being undertaken.

Tree Officer – No comments

Ward & Parish Councillors – No comments

Representations

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour notifications; 12no comments were received objecting to the proposal, raising concerns with the following elements:

- Very close to residential properties
- Concerns surrounding noise
- Potential health impacts
- Negative impact on visual amenity
- Impact on the adjacent trees
- Increased overshadowing
- A number of inaccuracies or omissions in the submission
- Loss of enjoyment of home and garden

Assessment

Principle of Development:

Schedule 2, Part 16 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 sets out the permitted development rights for electronic communications code operator with regards to development for the purpose of the operators electronic communications network.

Class A.1 (d) (i) allows for the replacement of a mast no greater than 30m above ground level.

Under Class A.7 the installation of electronic communications apparatus is permitted if the structure does not exceed 1.5m²

Under Class A.9 the installation of radio equipment housing is permitted where the development is ancillary to other electronic communications apparatus and the cubic volume does not exceed 90m³.

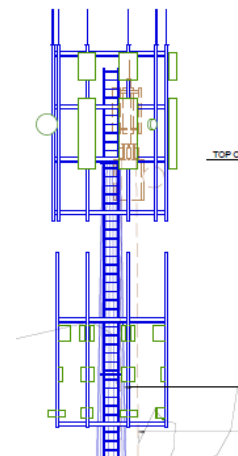
In accordance with the above, the proposed development falls under permitted development rights. However, paragraph A.3 (4) states that before beginning the development described in paragraph A.2(3), the developer must apply to the LPA for a determination as to whether prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the development. This is explored below.

Siting and Appearance:

It is acknowledged the the proposed 25m mast would replace a long established existing 22m mast. However, the existing mast consists of a relatively slender monopole with a relatively simple antenna arrangement on top. The replacement monopole is both taller and wider than the existing and has a significantly larger, wider and more cluttered antenna arrangement on top.



Existing



Proposed

It is noted that the site is set back from Doncaster Road and is not immediately adjacent to an adopted highway. It is also noted that there is a tree belt immediately adjacent as well as other mature trees within Ardsley Crematorium grounds, in addition to vertical structures such as lampposts within the immediate area. The site is also to the rear of existing residential properties.

However, the proposed monopole would have a greater height than the one it replaces. It would far exceed the height of the neighbouring residential properties and buildings and would also extend above the tree canopies, as such, it would be visible from the neighbouring residential development and its associated public vantage points. It would also be highly visible from the neighbouring crematorium, which has public access, and its associated grounds, car park and access points. In fact the vehicular route out of the crematorium runs immediately adjacent to the application site on a lower level.

The proposed development has a far more cluttered and challenging appearance than the monopole it replaces. The monopole itself would be wider and have a ladder structure running up it, however, the main impact on visual amenity would be provided by the circular support structures to the top of the monopole and the associated antennas and equipment attached. The accompanying Planning Statement states that 5G has more significant technical and operational requirements and this has implications on the amount, height, position and design of the new development and every effort has been made to keep the visual impacts to a minimum, however, it still has significantly more visual impact than the one it replaces.

This part of the development would be visible above the neighbouring buildings and trees and would not sit comfortably in its immediate leafy and low density surroundings, despite the trees and vertical structures with the area. It would have a far greater impact on the visual amenity of the area compared to the existing situation and would be contrary to Local Plan Policy D1 'Design' and paragraphs 126 and 130 of the NPPF which require the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable places.

All things considered the proposed development would result in a dominant, unsympathetic, and intrusive feature in the street scene, changing the character of the area, to the detriment of visual amenity and contrary to Local Plan Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making.

Further to the above, a number of residents have expressed concerns regarding their amenity due to the siting of the mast and associated equipment. It is noted there is an existing mast and similar level of equipment in a similar position, however, the proposed mast is larger and would have a greater impact on outlook and overshadowing compared to the existing situation. Furthermore, the applicants have stated that 5G has more significant technical and operational requirements compared to 3G and 4G, however, they have not stated what potential impact this could have on neighbouring residents in terms of noise and disturbance through cooling fans and noise generated by the machinery itself. A number of objections cited existing issues due to noise and disturbance with the existing equipments, therefore, without the required information it is difficult to assess whether the current situation would be improved or exaggerated.

Recommendation

Prior approval required and Refused