
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 January 2022

by Philip Major BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/21/3279867

Broadwater Lane, Hurst, Berkshire RG10 0EH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 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 Hutchison UK Ltd against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 211667, dated 7 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is an 18.0m Phase 8 Monopole C/W wraparound cabinet at the base and associated ancillary works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the locality, 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

3. I accept the need for a new installation in this general area in order to provide an acceptable telecommunications network utilising 5G technology. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports such high quality networks.
4. This particular mast and associated works would be located on the edge of the village of St Nicholas Hurst, within a rural area to the south of Twyford. The verge on which it would be located is unsurfaced, being laid to grass. Trees within the locality would offer some screening and filtering when seen from the south. Residential property lies immediately to the west.
5. The Appellant surprisingly refers to the presence of streetlights, but no such structures exist in this location. This is a significant error in the submitted material. Vertical street furniture is limited to modest timber electricity poles and a small mast containing lighting for the nearby public house car park. In this context the proposed installation of a telecommunications structure 18m

high would be an intrusive and incongruous incursion into the pleasant semi-rural character of the locality. The mast would be a strong feature on the otherwise relatively undisturbed skyline when seen from most public viewpoints. To suggest that there would be screening in all directions, as the Appellant does, is simply not the case.

6. The Appellant has made reference to a number of rejected locations which have been considered for this proposal. Whilst I accept that some of that information is logical, such as the areas where space is insufficient, there is a lack of justification for rejection in other cases. For example, option D7 is discounted 'due to underground services' but there is no explanation if this is simply a less convenient option, or whether services physically preclude the possibility of a mast installation. Option 1 shown on the map accompanying the appeal does not appear to be dealt with at all in representations. I am therefore not satisfied that alternatives have been adequately addressed.
7. Notwithstanding this lack of information to fully justify the proposed siting it is my judgement that the appearance of the proposed development would be significantly harmful to the overall character and appearance of the locality. This in itself is sufficient to rule out development at this site.
8. Although not subject to the requirements of S38(6) of the 1990 Act it is nevertheless the case that the proposal would not follow the objectives of the development plan. In particular there would be conflict with objectives seeking to encourage a high standard of design, objectives which are consistent with the NPPF.

Other Matter

9. Some comments have been made in relation to potential health impacts of this proposal. However, the appropriate certificate of ICNIRP¹ compliance has been submitted and this is not a matter which can weigh against the proposal.

Overall conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Major

Inspector

¹ International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection