

**Land Adjacent to Phoenix Park, Nelson's Lane, Reading RG10 ORR**

| Landscape and Trees                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <p>The Landscape and Tree Officer has objected on the basis on harm to landscape character (LCA I4 ["Hurst Farmed Clay Lowland"]).</p> <p>However conditions are suggested if the application is approved (please note a Tree Protection Plan has already been submitted for approval).</p> <p>The officer has also asked how it will be ensured that the masts are removed after the temporary period.</p> | <p>Amended drawings are submitted, with additional detail about the dimensions, and including photographs of very similar infrastructure, to clarify the visual appearance, including the very slim horizontal antennae.</p> <p>As explained in the Landscape Visual Appraisal (June 2025) by Abseline, it is accepted that the proposed development will give rise to some localised visual impacts and would also give rise to impact on the landscape character area (LCA I4 ["Hurst Farmed Clay Lowland"]).</p> <p>As summarised in the Planning Statement (section 4.0), the locational requirements for this technology are very precise. An extensive site search assessment has been undertaken to find a feasible and available site whilst seeking to avoid designated landscapes and other environmental protection areas (Site Selection Statement, June 2025).</p> <p>The Planning Statement has addressed how the proposal complies with adopted policy CP11 (Proposals outside Development Limits (including the countryside) and draft policy C7 (Digital Infrastructure and Communications Technology).</p> <p>Visual effects could be reduced to some extent by shortening the masts. However, this would disrupt the direct line of site to the target data centre (LD4 in Slough) and inevitably require at least one, and potentially more, relay sites (i.e. additional masts elsewhere). Not only would this compromise the robustness of the link by introducing more potential points of failure; it would also reduce the quality of service provision (where any delay in the relay of signals to the data centre is a commercial disadvantage). It would also require additional planning permission(s) and would distribute landscape impact more widely, including potentially in the Green Belt, where this would be classed as "inappropriate development" (NPPF 154).</p> <p>Reducing the proposal to a single mast would also compromise service quality and resilience. For optimal operational performance, four masts would be used. Therefore, the scale of the development has already been reduced (to two masts) to minimise the visual impact whilst retaining some resilience.</p> <p><b>To address the landscape objections, the applicant is reducing the temporary period it seeks to five years (rather than ten years).</b></p> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | This can be secured through an appropriately worded planning condition, against which the LPA could take enforcement action if necessary.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Highways                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Swept path with the largest vehicle proposed for erection works at the junction of site access/Nelson's Lane required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Drawing provided 29 <sup>th</sup> July 2025.<br><br>Access is via the existing business park, which already has visits from HGVs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>"The fundamental issue with this application is the visual impact of the masts on the local environment. Whilst it is acknowledged that the application is for temporary use – 10 years, the impact during this period would be significant.</i><br><br><i>These masts would be a dominant feature around Nelsons Land and Pound Lane and the immediate areas."</i> | The applicant has proposed to reduce the temporary period to 5 years.<br><br>Please also see the response to the Landscape and Tree Officer comments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>"The masts would be visible from Church Hill, an area of special character, and around the southern area of the parish and change the rural outlook."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                           | See Heritage Assessment – proposed development would not give rise to any loss of significance from any of the nearby designated heritage assets (e.g. Hurst Conservation Area including Church Hill).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>"The masts would not bring any economic benefit to the parish and would materially change the appearance of the area."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Whilst there may be no immediate benefit to the local community (but noting there is no policy obligation for it), the proposed development has significant national economic benefit, supporting trading through the London Stock Exchange. This principle has been established in the borough through the Bowsey Hill permission (Planning application 230251).<br><br>Visual impact to the local area will not be permanent. The proposed temporary period for permission has been reduced to 5 years. |
| <i>"There are no masts in the and around the area of a similar size."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | This is one of the reasons the site is proposed, so that there is less risk of interference from other telecommunications infrastructure.<br><br>It also means there is not a clustering of masts, which can have an even more harmful landscape impact.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | There are other tall structures in the area including a line of high voltage electricity pylons that passes through the local landscape, including close to the proposed masts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Mr Nicholas Watts (Knowlands, Nelson's Lane)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>1. Visual Impact and Character of the Area:</b></p> <p><i>The proposed masts, due to their height and industrial design, would be visually intrusive and out of character with the surrounding residential and green spaces. The structures, in addition to the existing telephone masts would dominate the skyline, detracting from the area's aesthetic appeal. A similar case in Bradford (Whetley Hill, January 2025) was rejected due to its proximity to existing masts. I see this as materially the same as the proximity of these proposed masts to the current telephone masts. These masts would be visible both from our garden, the street at the front of the house and the house itself and therefore have a negative impact on the well-being of my family and other residents who value the current landscape. Not only that, we would be extremely concerned that it would have a negative impact on the value of our property, and that of other residents.</i></p> | <p>Please see our response to the Landscape and Tree Officer.</p> <p>The applicant has been mindful of the amenity of the neighbouring residential properties. Whilst there will inevitably be visual impact in the locality, the precise placement of the masts has ensured that neither are in direct line of sight of this private home or any other neighbouring homes (which are relatively few in number in this part of the parish), whilst still achieving the direct line of sight with the LD4 data centre in Slough.</p> <p>Consideration of impact on individual properties has been addressed in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (Appendix 3 (Residential Visual Amenity Assessment)).</p> <p>The conclusion is that for each of the 12 properties assessed, including 'Knowlands', <i>"in no case would effects be of such nature and/or magnitude that it potentially affects living conditions at any property to the point it becomes an unattractive place to live, when judged objectively in the public interest"</i>.</p> <p>The Bradford example cited by the objector is a quite different context, being a busy, urban environment and where there were other masts already, causing a cluttered environment. Each case should be considered on its merits.</p> <p>Visibility from homes and impact on property values are not material planning considerations.</p> |
| <p><b>2. Proximity to Residential Areas and Public Spaces:</b></p> <p><i>The location is in relatively close proximity to our home as well as other homes in the area. We and other people who use the footpaths in the area value the space and natural beauty and the presence of large telecommunication structures would lead to a sense of</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>There are no public rights of way passing in close proximity of the site, which was one off the many considerations in selecting a site.</p> <p>Visual effects on recreational users of Public Rights of Way have been considered in the Landscape Visual Appraisal (June 2025).</p> <p>Visibility from homes and impact on property values are not material planning considerations.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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| <p><i>enclosure and may deter the use of the area for walkers, impact community cohesion and, as I have said, devalue the properties in the area.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>3. Environmental and Ecological Concerns:</b><br/> <i>The installation may lead to habitat loss for local wildlife. Additionally, the construction and maintenance activities could disrupt local ecosystems, contrary to the council's commitment to environmental preservation. We enjoy a multitude of wildlife in the area including foxes, badgers, owls, deer, bats, rabbits and numerous other birds. Disturbing the habitats of these animals would be tragic. We also get a lot of ground water in the area, which can often be very significant. Further concrete foundations and man made structures may exacerbate this situation which could be extremely damaging for both the natural habitats, as well as the houses and working buildings which are already in place.</i></p> | <p>Impact on the local environment and wildlife has been addressed thoroughly: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Pro Vision, June 2025), Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Pro Vision, June 2025) and Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (Calibro, June 2025).</p> <p>The development will have no adverse impact on protected species and, following implementation of the proposed habitat enhancement scheme, will lead to a biodiversity net gain on site (17.87% habitat units, 15.38% hedgerow units).</p> <p>The very limited footprint of the development will have a negligible impact on flood risk across the site or the neighbouring area. Utilising the existing access track and hardstanding will also reduce impacts.</p> |
| <p><b>4. Alternative Site Considerations:</b><br/> <i>It is unclear whether alternative sites with less environmental and residential impact have been thoroughly investigated. Has the company seeking approval, or the council explored whether existing structures or less intrusive sites are feasible alternatives before considering these new masts? Similar structures proposed in Ramsgate, Kent (Stirling Way, appeal Feb 2024) were rejected due to a failure to meaningfully consider alternate sites and how</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>A Site Selection Statement (Pro Vision, June 2025) has provided a thorough assessment of suitable locations in the region. This considers the specific technical requirements of the proposed communications system and relevant planning constraints to determine the viability and feasibility of locations within a defined area of search. The use of shared masts/antenna is also discussed.</p> <p>The applicant's specific operational requirements are summarised in Section 4.0 of the Planning Statement (June 2025).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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| <p><i>the masts would harm the character and outlook of the area.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>5. Safety Concerns:</b><br/> <i>We would be concerned that there may be an increased risk of fires or impacts on electricity supplies. The presence of these large masts would also create anxiety and concern amongst my family and other residents which would result in stress and a reduced quality of life. Given the potential negative impacts outlined above, I urge the council to reject this planning application. The preservation of our community's character, environmental integrity, and residents' well-being should take precedence over the proposed development.</i></p> | <p>Safety and security considerations are addressed in section 6 of the Planning Statement (June 2025).</p> <p>Even though the proposal is for a temporary period only, the applicant is committed to high construction and security standards, which is also vital for ensuring continuity of service provision to its customers. Any issues with the equipment would be rectified with urgency to avoid disruption to service.</p> <p>The proposed, temporary, development will not be a permanent change to the landscape.</p> <p>It should be noted that the primary operation is to receive signals broadcast from other countries and is not powering any transmission signals.</p> <p>The “final mile” are point to point links. These operate on just 40-60Watts.</p> <p>The entire site will consume considerably less power than the average dwelling. It could be possible to run the entire site from a single 13Amp extension lead.</p> |