

HERITAGE STATEMENT ASSESSMENT

The Proposed Development

Lower Stakehill Farm, Stakehill Lane, Middleton, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M24 2SA (NGR: E:388851, N:408637)

The installation of a replacement 25m-high telecommunications lattice tower, with 6no. antennas, 2no. transmission dishes, 4no. cabinets, plus ancillary works thereto.

The proposed installation will replace an existing installation, also located within Lower Stakehill Farm, Stakehill Lane Middleton, M24 2RY (E:389150, N:408572), which sits approximately 300m south-east of the site. The existing installation is approximately 20m in height and is due for removal for reasons outside of the operator's control.

The Site and its Relationship with Nearby Heritage Sites

The application site is situated within a privately owned field, part of Lower Stakehill Farm, within the Slattocks area. The immediate surrounding area is predominantly farmland, with Slattocks' residential area north of the site and an industrial area south of the site. The proposed development will ensure that existing network coverage provision is continued following the imminent removal of the existing Cornerstone base station, which currently services the local community. Furthermore, the proposed infrastructure will also provide enhanced mobile network coverage (i.e., 5G) to the surrounding area; providing improved connectivity, capacity and coverage for local residents and businesses and ensuring the next step in technological progression is available within Slattocks. Without the deployment of a replacement base station, the network services which have been provided to the local community for the last circa **20 years**, will be lost.

The application sits within the Merseyside and Greater Manchester Green Belt and there are two Heritage Asset located within the surrounding area. Due consideration has been given to any perceived significant harm caused to these assets due to the proposed development.

The nearby heritage assets are as follows:

- Thornham Parish War Memorial (List Entry Number: 1452837)
Heritage Category: Listed Building – Grade II
Date first listed: 05-Feb-2018
Approximate distance from Application Site: 225m
- Church of St John (List Entry Number: 1390504)
Heritage Category: Listed Building – Grade II
Date first listed: 09-May-2003
Approximate distance from Application Site: 230m

Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places an onus on those proposing changes to historic assets to include a clear description of the significance of the assets affected. It is

noted that the requirement in the NPPF is that *‘The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’.*

The site falls within the Merseyside and Greater Manchester Green Belt. Whilst this planning designation is acknowledged, the principle of the Development is established within The Order (GPDO). There is a clear distinction within the NPPF regarding ‘designated’ (i.e. Article 2(3) land) and ‘undesigned’ areas of land. As this application site sits within Green Belt, that is therefore recognised as ‘undesigned’ land from an electronic communication developmental perspective. As such, no further information needs to be provided to support this application, nor do “very special circumstances” need to be established.

From a siting and design perspective, it is considered that a suitable town planning and environmental solution has been brought forward, which utilises the existing mature tree cover along Thornham Lane to best screen, or backdrop, the proposed apparatus. Additionally, the Applicants are looking to provide network coverage to the Slattocks area, hence the infrastructure needs to sit within the Green Belt to achieve this. It should also be acknowledged that, as per national town planning legislation, there is no differentiation, in terms of application type, between new telecommunications base stations proposed within a designated area (i.e. within a Conservation area or AONB) or within an undesignated area (i.e. a Green Belt). The principle of the development – i.e. a 25m-high structure – is accepted within The Order (regardless of designation).

In any event, the Applicant’s consider the impact on the Green Belt and the Heritage Assets to be negligible, given the surrounding context of the area, and, when compared to the numerous positive public benefits of the scheme, and it’s clever siting and appearance, it is submitted that the development is wholly appropriate for the area. The site is also situated adjacent to the busy A627 road, which provides a utilitarian context for the proposed site.

It should be acknowledged at this juncture, that there is a run of 50m+-high pylons within 500m of the application site, running north-south parallel to the A664. These pylons are connected by overhead wires. As such, most views of the proposed infrastructure, will be framed in the same backdrop of the pylons and overhead cabling. Consequently, it is not anticipated that one 25m tower, such as the proposed development, will look incongruous given the presence of the multiple 50m+-high electricity pylons.

Figure 1, below, shows the location of pylons in relation to the application site.



Figure 1 – Aerial imagery of the Proposed Site (yellow marker), the Existing Site (red marker) and existing electricity pylons (blue markers) (Source: Gridreferencefinder.com)

The Historic England listings of the three heritage assets in the wider area are summarised below:

[Church of St John, Church Avenue \(List Entry Number: 1390504\)](#)

This Church was built in 1907 and is distinguished by rock-faced sneaked sandstone in large blocks with ashlar dressings and slate roofs with stone-coped gables and finials. The church comprises of a chancel, south vestry, chancel transepts, nave with aisles, west baptistery projection and southwest tower.

[Thornham Parish War Memorial, Church Avenue \(List Entry Number: 1452837\)](#)

Thornham Parish war memorial was erected in 1921 to the men from the Parish who fell during the First World War. The war memorial stands within the churchyard of the Church of St John and is situated centrally in relationship to the south elevation of the church. The memorial comprises a plain granite crucifix, surmounted by a wheel cross, with a central laurel wreath carved in relief. The shaft has a stepped base and is mounted on a pedestal with a plain cornice.

Other Heritage Assets in Close Proximity

The following heritage assets are also close to the application site. However, given the distance from the Site and the presence of mature trees located within that distance, which provide an excellent screening solution, it is anticipated that there will be no significant impact on the following heritage asset:

- Rochdale Canal Slattocks Top Lock (Number 54) And Adjoining Bridge (List Entry Number: 1068507)
Heritage Category: Listed Building – Grade II
Date first listed: 23-Mar-1987

Approximate distance from Application Site: 420m

The presence of the above asset within proximity of the application site is acknowledged. However, it is anticipated the installation will pose little, to no, impact on the Grade II bridge above due to its distance from the Proposed Site and the mature trees that will provide excellent screening.

The Proposal and it's Potential Relationship with and Impact on Nearby Heritage Assets:

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that, '*Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification*'.

As the replacement 25-metre-high telecommunications mast is proposed at this new location, an impact assessment has been undertaken regarding the two heritage assets listed above. The proposed installation will replace the existing and established telecommunications base station which has serviced this area for circa 20 years. The proposed installation will replace an existing installation, also located within Lower Stakehill Farm, Stakehill Lane Middleton, M24 2RY (E:389150, N:408572). There will be no net gain or proliferation of telecommunication base stations, within the surrounding area because of this proposal – i.e. this is a one-for-one swap, which is supported in both local and national planning policy (see Supplementary Information document for further details).

As a more robust installation is required to accommodate 5G apparatus, a taller structure is necessary. A detailed justification for a more robust mast is included in the Supplementary Information document which accompanies this planning application. Given the increased size of the proposed base station and the relocation of the existing network cell – the impact on each of these Grade II Listed Heritage Assets has been assessed below:

Church of St John, Church Avenue (List Entry Number: 1390504)

This Grade II Listed Church is situated to the northwest of the application site, approximately 230 metres away, with the front of the building facing a south-easterly direction (see blue arrow on Figure 2, below). Given the tree cover which separates the Heritage Asset from the Proposed Site (outlined in yellow on Figure 2) and the significant distance between the Proposed Site and the Heritage Asset, there will be no direct views of the proposed base station installation from the Church of St John. Any visibility that there might be of the Proposed Site from the Church of St John will be less than significant and will not cause any harm to the Heritage Asset.



Figure 1 – Church of St John (purple marker), Proposed Site (yellow marker) (Source: Gridreferencefinder.com)

Thornham Parish War Memorial (List Entry Number: 1452837)

This Grade II Listed War Memorial stands within the churchyard of the Church of St John and is situated centrally in relationship to the south elevation of the church, approximately 225m away, with the front of the building facing westerly (see blue arrow on Figure 3, below). Given the tree cover (outlined in yellow on Figure 3) which separates the Heritage Asset from the Proposed Site and the significant distance between the Proposed Site and the Heritage Asset, there will be no direct views of the proposed base station installation from the War Memorial. Therefore, the proposed development will it is considered that there will be no direct views of the proposed installation from the War Memorial, and therefore any harm caused to the heritage asset, or views of the heritage asset, will be less than significant.

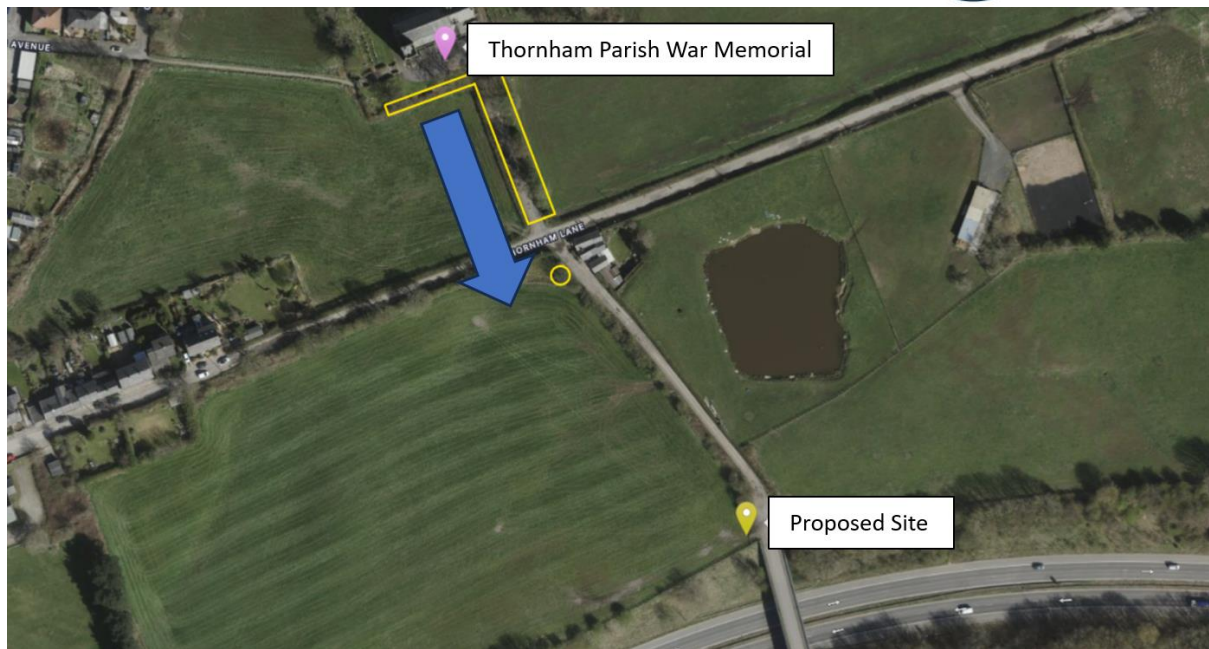


Figure 3 – Thornham Parish War Memorial (pink marker), Proposed Site (yellow marker) (Source: Gridreferencefinder.com)