

APPLICATION NUMBER: 24/00589/TELE

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.

24/00589/TELE

CASE OFFICER

Aimee Bovaird

DETERMINATION DATE 12.08.2024 **EXT OF TIME**

Address: Land North Of Gypsy Lane And Between Tetrosyl Site, Castleton, OL11 3DT

Proposal: Prior notification for a proposed 20m high telecommunications monopole installation and ground-based equipment cabinets within a secure, fenced compound; and ancillary development thereto.

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	Y
	Neighbour letters expired?	Y	Press Notice expired?	Y

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N/A	Contrary to national policy?	N/A
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N/A	Contrary to previous decision?	N/A
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N/A	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N/A

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	Y

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	N
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N

RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE
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SITE

This application site lies south of Tetrosyl (Royal Barn Distribution Centre), a distribution service and is adjacent to Gypsy Lane. South of the site lies residential dwellings and Castleton Station. The site can be accessed off Royle Barn Road which runs north of the site, Rochdale Canal runs adjacent to the site.

The site is located in within the Defined Urban and a Primary Employment Zone. Immediately north of the site lies Tetrosyl and industrial buildings. South of the site is Castleton (South) Conservation Area, this is a designated heritage asset along with Arrow Mill a grade II listed building. Blue Pitts Mill and Linden Mill which have group value. Rochdale Canal and March Bridge are also located in the vicinity. .

PROPOSAL

The application seeks prior approval for the installation of a 20m high telecommunications monopole installation and ground-based equipment cabinets within a secure, fenced compound; and ancillary development thereto.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended).

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Places for Everyone

JP-S1 Sustainable Development
JP-C2 Digital Connectivity

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place
P2 Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3 Improving design of new development
DM1 General Development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

24/00112/TELE - Prior notification for a proposed 30m high telecommunications monopole installation and ground-based equipment cabinets within a secure, fenced compound; and ancillary development thereto. – withdrawn.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No objections.

Highways And Engineering

No objections.

Conservation And Design

Summary,

“The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets, through inappropriate development within its setting. This should be balanced against any public benefits arising from the proposal.”

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by way of neighbour notification and a site notice was displayed in the vicinity. One objection has been received, this objection raises that the current base station in the vicinity will not be redundant in the near future and the developer does not have powers to consolidate the use of other nearby structures.

ANALYSIS

Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) states that development consisting of the installation, alteration or replacement of electronic communications apparatus (other than on a building) is not permitted by Class A(a) if –

- (a) in the case of the installation of electronic communications apparatus (other than a mast), the apparatus, excluding any antenna, would exceed a height of 15 metres above ground level;
- (b) in the case of the alteration or replacement of electronic communications apparatus (other than a mast) that is already installed, the apparatus, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced exceed the height of the existing apparatus or a height of 15 metres above ground level, whichever is the greater;

- (c) in the case of the installation of a mast, the mast, excluding any antenna, would exceed a height of—
 - (i) 30 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or
 - (ii) 25 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway; or
- (d) in the case of the alteration or replacement of a mast, the height of the mast, excluding any antenna, would when altered or replaced exceed the greater of the height of the existing mast or a height of—
 - (i) 30 metres above ground level on unprotected land; or
 - (ii) 25 metres above ground level on article 2(3) land or land which is on a highway; or
- (e) in the case of the alteration or replacement of a mast—
 - (i) the mast is on any land which is, or is within, a site of special scientific interest; and
 - (ii) the mast would, when altered or replaced, exceed the original width of the mast by more than one third.

The erection of a pole up to 20m in height on the highway to support electronic communications transmission apparatus with associated street cabinet would be development permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A.

The application is therefore for a determination whether the prior approval of the Council will be required as to the siting and appearance of the installation, as required under paragraph A.3 of the Order.

Siting and appearance

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF requires installations to be kept to a minimum and encourages the reuse of existing electronic communications infrastructure such as existing masts, buildings and other structures. Where new sites are required such as for new 5G networks, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

There is no requirement to have regard to the development plan as there would be for any development requiring planning permission. Nevertheless, Policies P1, P2, P3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy are material considerations as they relate to issues of siting, appearance and heritage. In addition, Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of the recently adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) are relevant given their aspirations to achieve high quality places and to conserve, sustain and enhance heritage assets and their settings. PfE Policy JP-C2 emphasises the ambition for Greater Manchester to become a digitally connected city region, however does explicitly set out that this should not come at the expense of townscape quality. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is also a material consideration, and this includes a section on supporting high quality communications. Paragraph 139 of the Framework is explicit in that development which is not well-designed should be refused.

The application site is north of Castleton (South) Conservation Area. The proposed monopole would be a substantial structure and is considered wide due to the antenna at the top of the monopole. The previous application was 30m high and had two headframes, this proposal has been reduced to 20m in height and one headframe, it is acknowledged this would result in a lesser impact however the monopole will still tower above the immediate street furniture and rise above the existing buildings. There is limited vegetation and this will not mitigate the prominence and scale of the proposed structure. The headframe would be 3.6m wide and this will appear intrusive within the skyline.

The proposed compound will have a 2.4m high galvanised fence around the boundary of the base of the tower and this would introduce a hostile and uninviting feature which would harm the character and appearance of the area. Albeit, this harm is limited to localised areas around the base of the monopole which would not be frequented by the public.

When considering the visual impact the proposed development will be seen from Royle Barn Road and residential housing on Smalley Street. There will be visibility of the tower from both designated and non-designated heritage assets, in particular it will be highly visible from the Castleton South Conservation Area, Arrow Mill, Linden and Blue Pitt mills this is not considered acceptable in terms of siting and appearance.

Information submitted states the proposed monopole is sharable and will allow the deployment of antennas and dishes for all operators and in time may lead to the removal of existing infrastructure. There are two masts in proximity of the site. No specific details of timeframes or operators have been provided. Comments received indicate that the applicant does not have control over existing masts in the area and as such the removal of such features cannot be relied upon and this is afforded no weight in the consideration of this application.

Heritage

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

Arrow mill lies 170m east of the site and is a grade 2 listed building for its architectural and historic interest. The application states the proposed development is small and discreet and have no physical impact on this heritage assets. The proposal is not discreet and will be visible within the setting of Arrow Mill and in the skyline. The proposed monopole will not match the height of the chimney on Arrow Mill however is not considered discrete due to the headframe and will still be a dominant feature. Castleton (South) Conservation Area lies south of the site and has key views of Arrow Mill, this is in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Blue Pitts Mill is a three story red bricked building with original features and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area this along with Linden Mill have group value and contribute to the industrial value of the area. There would be visibility of the monopole from these locations.

March Bridge is a scheduled monument and is a heritage assets of the highest significance for the purposes of the NPPF. This bridge crosses the Rochdale Canal that cuts through the conservation area. The canal is an important feature within the townscape and holds group value with the adjacent mills.

Figure 1 below shows the close proximity of the proposed site marked in red and the heritage assets. The image shows Arrow Mill, Blue Pitts Mill and Linden Mill, the conservation area is hatched in pink.

The impact of the proposed development is a material consideration. Overall the proposed development comprises a wholly inappropriate form of development in a prominent location between heritage assets which will cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets setting and the visual competition within the townscape which it would create contrary to Policy P2 of the adopted Core Strategy, PfE Policy JP-P2 and the NPPF. In accordance with paragraph 206 of the framework, any harm to the setting of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

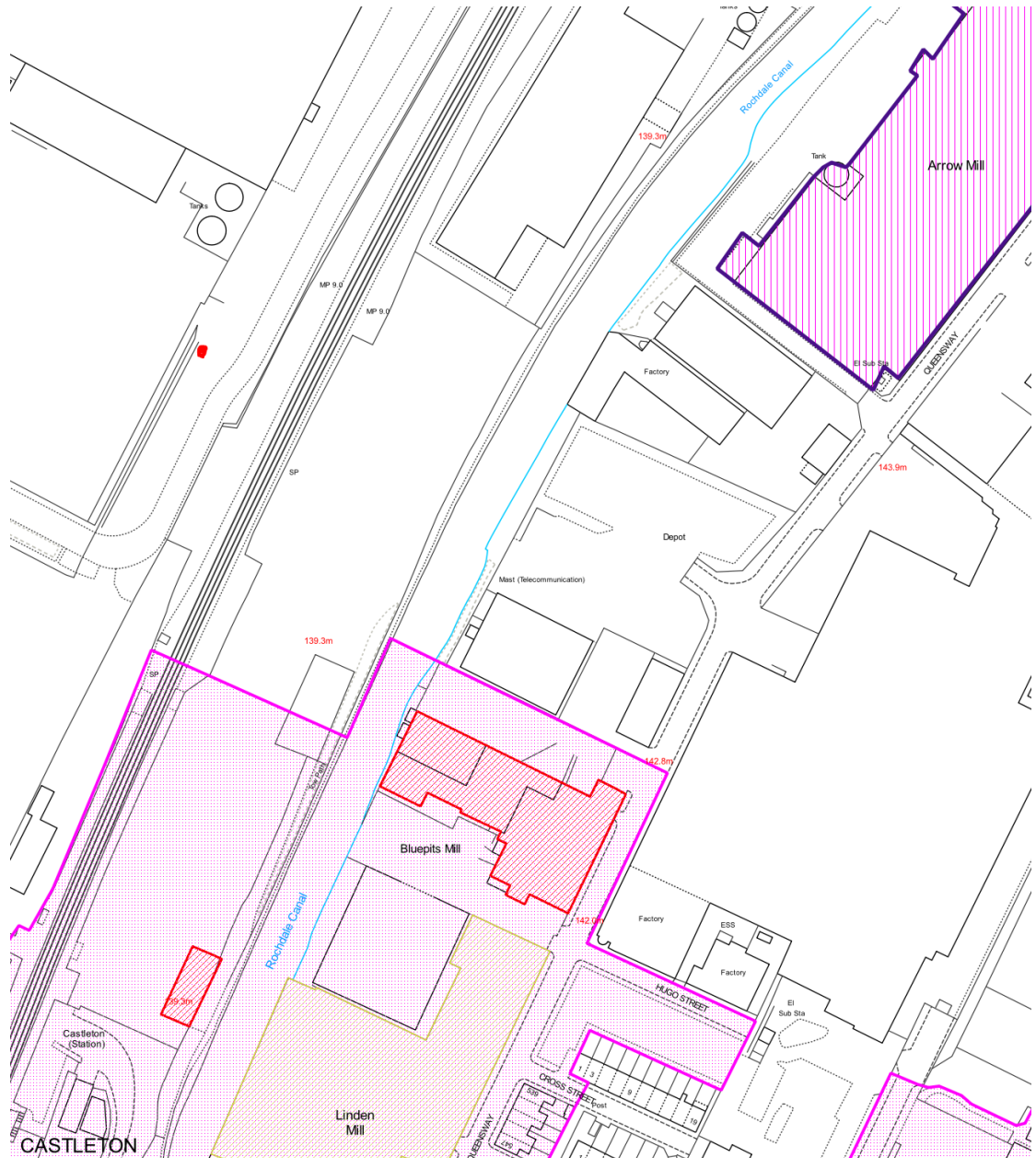


Figure 1.

Site selection

The application sets out the need for an expansion of infrastructure as necessary for business development and meeting specific technical and operational requirements. No information has been provided on the extent of the coverage of the current network. An understanding of the broader network context is helpful to properly appreciate how a proposed mast fits into the network and to then be able to assess what alternatives have been investigated.

The application includes a Site Specific Supplementary Information, which details the site selection process providing details of alternative sites considered for development. No details have been provided in respect of the cell search area, or of the cell centre and other existing sites in the surrounding area, which would be useful in demonstrating the suitability of the site. A total of 12 alternative sites have

considered within this assessment, and have been discounted due to planning or physical constraints which discount the sites for development.

No further information has been provided to conclude that the twelve sites in this assessment, plus the application site, are the only viable sites to fulfil the needs of the operator within this undefined area. No details have been received of existing installations within the vicinity of the site and any reasoning for discounting mast sharing.

Concerns are also raised in respect of the robustness of the assessment of the chosen alternative sites as the supporting information for each supporting site is very limited; site D1 is discounted on the vague assessment that it is outside the boundary of the industrial area, and *“Offered a poorer town planning and environmental option when compared to the application site.”* Site D10 has been discounted on the assumption that the development would be framed in views of the chimney stack of Arrow Mill, however it cannot conclusively be determined that the degree of harm arising from the installation of a monopole at either of these locations would give rise to additional harm over the proposals currently under consideration.

Under Appeal ref. APP/P4225/W/20/3259908, the Inspector stated that the evidence provided in a directly comparable assessment was *“less than compelling,”* and that the applicant had failed to *“robustly demonstrate that a satisfactory level of coverage could not be achieved in another location where a 20m mast would not have such an adverse visual impact.”* As this application demonstrates similar shortcomings in its assessment of alternative sites, it would not possible to definitively conclude that there are no more suitable sites reasonably available that would result in a lesser degree of visual harm.

Conclusion

Within the context of paragraph 208 of the Framework, whilst it is acknowledged that the proposals would result in social and economic benefits through the improvements to local communications networks, it is not considered that the application suitably demonstrates that it would not be possible to achieve the desired coverage at a site which would be less harmful to the significance of designated heritage assets, and taken as a whole, would fail to comply with the requirements of paragraphs 119 to 121 of the NPPF. Prior approval for the siting and appearance is therefore required and the application is refused.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reason:

1. The site is north of Castleton (South) Conservation Area and in close proximity to a number of Heritage Assets which contribute group value and are dominant features within the townscape. The proposed 20m high monopole by reason of its significant scale, siting and appearance, would fail to sit sympathetically with, and respond positively to, the conservation area and surrounding heritage assets. The proposal would result in less than

substantial harm to its significance. By reason of its siting and scale, the proposed monopole would also give rise to an unacceptable impact to the character and appearance of the area and would comprise a wholly inappropriate addition to the townscape. In addition, the proposals would set a dominant and incongruous feature in a prominent location in front of Arrow Mill. In the absence of a comprehensive assessment of alternative sites for the proposed development it is not possible to definitively conclude that there are no more suitable sites reasonably available that would result in a lesser degree of visual harm, and the public benefits of the proposal are not considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm identified. On this basis the application is contrary to Policies P1, P2, P3, and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policies JP-S4, JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-C2 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Notes for Applicant:

For the avoidance of doubt, this decision relates to the following plans:

Location Plan 100 Issue B
Proposed Site Layout 201 Issue B
Proposed Site Elevation 301 Issue B

Report Author Aimee Bovaird