

Officer Report

Case Reference: NOT/2026/0620
Location: Land at C Norris Springs Ltd, Lady House Works, Milnrow, OL16 4JD
Proposal: Prior notification for the installation of a 20m lattice tower with an open headframe supporting, 12 no. antennas, 4 no. 0.3m transmission dishes, along with 2 no. equipment cabinets, 1 no. electric meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto including 30 no. Ericsson Radio Systems (ERS's), contained within a 2m high palisade fence
Recommendation: Prior Approval Not Required
Officer: Majid Mir

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The application relates to a small section of the car park at C Norris Springs Ltd, which is identified as an industrial unit. The industrial unit is accessed off a single lane that connects to Newhey Road. The entrance to the industrial unit is approximately 70m from the junction with Newhey Road.

To the west is Butterworth Hall Brooks which runs along the whole of the western boundary of the C. Norris Springs Ltd. Further west is brownfield land that previously had an industrial unit that has since been demolished. The land appears to be presently unoccupied. Planning permission for 40 dwellings was refused and dismissed on appeal 2021 (17/00070/FUL). Also to the west is Lady House Mill. Lady House Mill is sited close the boundary of the industrial unit. The building is a three-storey structure that also appears to be unoccupied and in a state of disrepair. To the north is green field land. To the northeast is Pennine Precinct; a mixed used development consisting of commercial units and flats. To the east is an industrial unit that appears to be used by motor vehicle garage. Further east is a petrol station that is located off Newhey Road. To the south of the industrial unit are the residential dwellings on Lambourne Grove.

PROPOSAL

The application is for prior approval for the installation of a 20m lattice tower with an open headframe supporting, 12 no. antennas, 4 no. 0.3m transmission dishes, along with 2 no. equipment cabinets, 1 no. electric meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto including 30 no. Ericsson Radio Systems (ERSs) and contained within a 2m high palisade fence. The application is made under Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

RELEVANT PLANNING

19/00084/DOC - Submission of details to comply with condition 4 (Drainage) of planning permission 17/00937/FUL. Decision: Request completed.

17/00937/FUL - Erection of storage building. Decision: Approve with conditions.

96/D33513 – Extension to existing factory. Decision: Approve with conditions.

85/D17581 - Single storey office and factory extension and new septic tank. Decision: Approve with conditions.

77/D05257 - Single storey extension to existing workshop area. Decision: Approve with conditions.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Legislation

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

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Places for Everyone (PfE)

JP-S1 - Sustainable Development

JP-P1 - Sustainable Places

JP-P2 - Heritage

JP-C2 - Digital Connectivity

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS)

P1 - Improving image

P2 - Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

P3 - Improving design of new development

T2 - Improving Accessibility

Appendix 5 - Schedule of Parking Standards

DM1 General development requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

PUBLICITY

Site Notice: 14.08.2026

Press Notice: N/A

Neighbour notification letters: 13.08.2026

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to neighbouring properties and a site notice was placed in the vicinity of the site. Five objections were received. The representations have been summarised below:

Visual Amenity/Design/Character

- Negative visual amenity impact.
- Proximity to residential properties and visual impact – dwellings 30m and 50m away from mast.
- Colour does not adequately address visual impact of the proposal.
- Colour, height, form, position and relationship with surrounding buildings and landscape affect the character of the area and the outlook from neighbouring properties.
- The immediate surroundings are not solely industrial in character but also residential and green/open areas.
- The proposed tower is located less than 6 metres from a building currently being re-submitted for planning permission to convert it into six residential apartments. The scale and proximity of the structure would have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity, outlook, and the quality of future living conditions.
- **Officer comments: Where relevant, concerns raised are discussed below.**

Principle

- Application does not demonstrate that there are no other technically viable locations within the wider search area which could provide the required coverage with less impact on surrounding properties.
- Consider alternative locations elsewhere within the industrial estate, along Newhey Road, or in the vicinity of the motorway service station.
- Emerging housing development within vicinity the site.
- Insufficient information provided sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that this is the only suitable location.

- There is a clear public benefit associated with improving telecommunications coverage. However, that requirement should not remove the need to carefully consider where the infrastructure is located.
- Would support the provision of improved telecommunications coverage, but believe a more appropriate site should be identified if one can achieve the same objective with significantly less impact on neighbouring residents.
- **Officer comments: Where relevant, concerns raised are discussed below.**

Highway

- Access lane is narrow private road serving Ladyhouse Mill and is not an adopted public highway.
- Does not have right of access to the site via the lane.
- Impact on lane and Bilson Brook by construction vehicles.
- This is a private access with no public highway status and no unrestricted right of use for construction or operational purposes associated with this development.
- The access is a narrow single-track private road which is not designed to accommodate heavy construction traffic or repeated maintenance vehicle movements.
- a stone retaining wall which supports the carriageway and runs adjacent to Bilson Brook. This structure was not engineered for increased loading, vibration, or the type of heavy vehicle use associated with the construction and servicing of a 20m telecommunications tower.
- There is a real risk of damage to both the road and retaining wall, with consequential safety implications and disruption to existing users, including two local businesses who rely on this access.
- Traffic increase – there is already a congestion problem in the area.
- **Officer comments: Access and ownership concerns are outside the remit of the prior approval assessment. Structural integrity of the structure is covered by other legislations and regulations. Where relevant, concerns raised are discussed below.**

Other

- The submitted application is factually incorrect in its description of access. The access is not via “Dale Street” but via an unadopted private road.
- Trees from neighbouring removed and therefore impacted on wildlife. Mast will not help.
- **Officer comments: The Lane is identified as Dale Street on some mapping systems. The plans adequately identify the location of the proposed mast. The trees on the neighbouring site have been removed and the site of the mast consists of hardstanding.**

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Conservation

The proposal is for the installation of a new 20m lattice tower with antennas mounted on a headframe at the top of the tower. The lattice frame design along with the headframe would give the structure a greater visual impact within the streetscene than a slimline monopole. As a result of its height and form, it would be visible in some views into and out of the Conservation Areas, as well as the surviving elements of both Lady House and Albert Mills. It is considered

that there would be some limited harm resulting from the siting, height and design of the new mast, which would be an alien feature in the streetscene. This should be balanced against the public benefits.

It is noted that the supporting information proposes the removal of the existing telecoms equipment on Albert Mill. The removal of this equipment is welcomed and ideally should be conditioned.

Env Health - Noise/Odours

No response received to date.

Highway and Engineering

This application seeks to make use of a private industrial yard area to erect a telecommunications tower. We would not expect any significant generation of traffic to generated by this proposal once construction is completed. The access to the yard is probably adequate to support the construction of this tower. There is no changes to the existing highways network as a result of this proposal and no new highways as a result of this proposal.

The main issue with this proposal is the use of the service yard for a purpose other than its design. This area is used for car parking storage and operational activities such as servicing the development. Whilst the area may appear redundant at times it may be critical to the function of the business at others. Should the area be required and the installation of this telecommunications tower compromise the function of the yard it is likely the narrow unadopted Dale Street is used. Dale Street is narrow an any parked cars, plant or materials stored along this lane threatens both operation of the lane for the businesses The Milnrow Motoring Company and C Norris Springs and access for Emergency Service Vehicles. I would seek confirmation from the business operator that the area proposed for the siting of the tower is redundant and its use does not threaten the safe function of this operational/service space.

Amendments to Consultation Response: No amendments to report.

Officer Recommendation: We defer our recommendation regarding this application.

ASSESSMENT

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;

(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 lattice tower 20m in height and away from 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

Chapter 9 of the NPPF states that the objective of the policies within the chapter are to ‘support the expansion and upgrading of telecommunications infrastructure, in ways which limit an unnecessary proliferation of equipment and respect important environmental safeguards. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications are essential to meet changing technological, social, business and security requirements (including through delivering coverage of higher quality standalone 5G in all populated areas by 2030, and nationwide gigabit-capable broadband by 2032).

Policy CO1 of the NPPF states ‘in considering proposals for the expansion or upgrading of electronic telecommunications networks, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of maintaining or improving network coverage, capacity, reliability and resilience, including where significant improvements are required such as along rail corridors.’ Policy CO1 adds that ‘proposals for such development should:

a. Use existing masts, buildings and other structures already employed for this purpose, upgrade, or replace existing infrastructure, unless there is no reasonable opportunity to do so (taking into consideration meeting consumer needs, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion);

b. Be sited and designed to minimise the visual impact of the proposals, especially in situations where a new site or structure is proposed, so far as practical taking into account its operational requirements;

c. Not result in cumulative exposure to non-ionising radiation exceeding International Commission guidelines when the development is operational; and

d. Not cause significant and irremediable interference with other electrical equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest. improvements are required

Policy CO1 adds that ‘in assessing proposals for telecommunications infrastructure, local planning authorities should not require minimum distances to be maintained between telecommunications infrastructure and other development, seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the expansion or upgrading of telecommunications networks, or use health safeguarding standards different from the International Commission guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection.

The adopted Rochdale Core Strategy does not contain any policies specific to telecommunications application given that the NPPF contains a clear expression of Government policy that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and in this respect there is encouragement to local planning authorities to support the expansion of electronic communication networks, including telecommunications. However, Policy DM1 states that proposals should be compatible with surrounding land uses and not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users through visual intrusion, overbearing impact, overshadowing or loss of privacy.

While Policy JP-C2 of Places for Everyone emphasises the ambition for Greater Manchester to become a digitally connected city region, it is also clear that this ambition should not come at the expense of townscape quality. In addition, policy P1 of the Core Strategy requires high quality design in all new developments and policy P3 requires new development to enhance the boroughs identity and sense of place by respecting context where it is positive and having regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas in general.

The application site is within vicinity of the designated heritage assets of Butterworth Hall Conservation Area and Butterworth Hall (Municipal Buildings) Conservation Area, and the non-designated heritage assets Albert Mill and Lady House Mill. As such, policies P2 of the Core Strategy and policy JP-P2 of the PfE are of relevance. Policy HE6 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. Policy JP-P2 of PfE states that development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy. Policy P2 of the Core Strategy promotes the protection and enhancement of key heritage assets and their visual amenity.

Finally, policy HE6 of the NPPF states that ‘when considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset’s conservation’. Policy HE7 of the NPPF states that ‘where a development proposal would harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the benefits of the proposal and a balanced judgement made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated

heritage asset.' Policies HE6 and HE7 state that development proposals which would have a positive effect on designated or non-designated heritage assets should be supported.

The application proposes to install a 20m lattice tower with an open headframe supporting, 12 no. antennas, 4 no. 0.3m transmission dishes, along with 2 no. equipment cabinets, 1 no. electric meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto including 30 no. and Ericsson Radio Systems (ERS's). The tower and the associated equipment will be contained within a 2m high palisade fence. The application proposes that the mast will be a galvanised colour.

The application site is a small section of the car parking area of C. Norris Springs Ltd. The site is accessed by a single track lane that ends at the neighbouring property to the east. The lane is used primarily by the industrial units. The lane does not support through traffic. The built structures on the application site and on the neighbouring sites screen the base of the site from three sides. The main views of the mast and associated equipment would be from the flats within Pennine Precinct and Stone Street. Habitable rooms within the residential properties would directly face towards to the proposed mast. The properties would be approximately 30m and 50m away from the application site. In both cases, the mast and its associated equipment would be viewed in the backdrop of the industrial units and buildings. However, owing to the distance, lack of obstructions and the angle of the residential properties, the proposed mast would be a dominant structure. Owing to the height and the bulk, there is also likely to appear slightly overbearing when viewed the Pennine Precinct in particular.

Views of the headframe and the upper part of the mast would be visible from Dale Street/Newhey Road and Lambourne Grove. The headframe and mast would be approximately 77m from the Lambourne Grove, and 55m from the rear gardens of the properties on Lambourne Grove. In regard to the rear of the properties, views would be obscured by the trees and the adjoining industrial units.

When viewed from Dale Street/Newhey Road, the headframe and mast would be viewed within the backdrop of the petrol station, and to a lesser extent, within the backdrop of the commercial units. The galvanised colour would reduce its prominence in comparison to grey or green colours that are commonly used.

When viewed in relation to the designated and non-designated heritage, due to height and form, it would be visible in some views into and out of the Conservation Areas, as well as the surviving elements of both Lady House and Albert Mills. The Conservation Officer concluded that there would be some limited harm resulting from the siting, height and design of the new mast, which would be an alien feature in the streetscene. However, as noted by the Conservation Officer, this should be balanced against the public benefits. It is accepted that slimline monopole would have reduced visual impact within the streetscene, however, the overall difference would be limited owing to the headframe being the most visible element of the telecommunications equipment when viewed heritage assets and Dale Street/Newhey Road.

The applicant has confirmed that the existing telecommunications equipment and associated equipment will be removed following operation of the proposed mast and telecommunications equipment. The impact of the telecommunications mast and headframe must be balanced against the public benefit with the increased coverage area of the telecommunications mast, alternative options and the removal of the telecommunications mast on the roof of Albert Mill. The removal of the telecommunication equipment would have a positive impact on both the designated heritage assets and the non-designated heritage asset. The telecommunications mast would have a reduce prominence when viewed in comparison to the existing equipment.

As such, the removal of the telecommunications equipment from the roof of Albert Mill and installation in the proposed location would have a neutral impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset and the non-designated heritage asset of Albert Mill.

It is noted that the Conservation Officer has requested a condition be included requiring the removal of the telecommunication equipment, however, paragraph A.2(2) already imposes that requirement. Additionally, condition 4 attached with planning permission 21/01114/FUL, requires the telecommunications apparatus and all associated appurtenances to be removed from the site within a period of 3 months from the date when the need for its use ceased. As such, any existing apparatus remains subject to the relevant planning regime and any applicable conditions or statutory obligations requiring its removal when no longer required.

Furthermore, the supporting statement has assessed fifteen alternative sites, and it is accepted that, excluding D3, the proposed site will have the least visual impact and would be the least prominent from public locations and the highway. It is also noted that as stated in the supporting report, 'the location is the optimum location, as it is located towards the centre of the search area and located near to the existing site.' Although there are potentially alternative sites within existing or former industrial units or by the motorway, these options would not allow for all three sectors to reach the target coverage area owing to their distance away from the search area or away from the centre of the search area. The proposed mast in this location would allow for multiple providers to share equipment and thereby reducing the proliferation of telecommunications in the immediate area. Additionally, it is noted that in regard to the land by Butterworth Hall Works, it is noted that there are also residential properties in close vicinity to the site, there is a public right of way that is adjacent to the land, is adjacent to a Conservation Area and is approximately 100m from grade II listed buildings.

Whilst the overall scale of the mast and the obtrusiveness of the uncovered headframe cannot be understated, such development can be considered appropriate within the proposed location in comparison to other viable options within the search area. The views of the telecommunications mast and headframe would be predominantly viewed in the backdrop, and in particular, in the backdrop of commercial and industrial buildings. Although there are residential properties within 30 to 50m of the site, and there would be some harm to the occupiers of the neighbouring residential properties, this harm needs to be balanced against the harm that would be experienced on alternative sites.

It is noted that that the proposed mast and headframe would be set further away from residential properties than those sited on Albert Mill, although it would not have the same bulk or prominence. Alternative viable sites identified would have a substantial greater amenity impact of occupiers of neighbouring properties than the one proposed. Additionally, the proposed site is one of the least prominent sites within the search area where the telecommunications mast can be appropriately installed.

As noted above, policy CO1 of the NPPF requires the proposals 'be sited and designed to minimise the visual impact of the proposals, especially in situations where a new site or structure is proposed, so far as practical taking into account its operational requirements'. In this regard, it is considered that the proposed site, use of galvanised colour and removal of existing telecommunications equipment sited on a prominent non-designated heritage asset sited on the busy Newhey Road, aims to minimise the visual impact of the proposal as is practical when taking into consideration operational requirements. Although harm has been identified to the neighbouring residential properties, this is balanced against potential harm identified on alternative sites and the substantial weight that should be given to the benefits of

maintaining or improving network coverage, capacity, reliability and resilience, including where significant improvements are required.

On balance, it is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in regard the amenity impact of the proposal.

Highway safety

Policy TR6 of the NPPF states that ‘development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement. This applies both during the construction phase and following completion.

The highways department concluded that they would not expect any significant generation of traffic to generated by this proposal once construction is completed. Additionally, the highways department raised no concerns in regard to the access to the site and the impact on the existing highways network.

The highways department did however raise concerns in regard to the use of the service yard for a purpose other than its design. The highways department noted that the area is used for car parking storage and operational activities such as servicing the development and that whilst the area may appear redundant at times, it may be critical to the function of the business. As such, the highways department noted that the should the area be required and the installation of this telecommunications tower compromise the function of the yard, it is likely the narrow unadopted Dale Street is used. The highways department argued that the use of Dale Street (lane) for parked cars, plant or materials stored would threaten both operation of the lane for the businesses and access for Emergency Service Vehicles. As such, the highways department requested confirmation from the business operator that the area proposed for the siting of the tower is redundant and its use does not threaten the safe function of this operational/service space. The applicant has confirmed that the use of the land would not impact on the operator’s overall operation. It is also noted that Dale Street is a private lane, with permission likely required prior to siting of equipment/cars/materials on the lane.

It is noted that the lane is used to access the site to the west of the application site, the application site and the motor vehicle garage located to the west. Access to the site is via Newhey Road located to the west of the garage. The telecommunications compound would be enclosed by a palisade fence with the area covering being approximately 6.7m wide (when including the opening of the gate). There are no formalised parking bays within the site. The compound would see the loss of at least three standard parking spaces or two accessible car parking spaces. The officer notes that there were vehicles parked on the site of the proposed telecommunications mast on the day of the site visit, however, other parts of the site were free of any vehicles.

Policy TR2 of the NPPF states that ‘maximum standards for car parking should be set where they will support efforts to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes and shared transport, optimise the density of development in well-connected locations, or where they are necessary for managing the local road network. The Core Strategy sets out maximum parking standards, with industrial units required to provide a maximum of 1 vehicle parking space per 60m². This would equate to a maximum of approximately 18 parking spaces. It is noted that

with the loss of the parking spaces, there would be approximately eleven parking spaces available on the site. This would exclude the site presently used to store equipment and materials. It is further noted that the site is located within a sustainable location with good public transport links.

In conclusion, the addition of the telecommunications mast and associated equipment and the loss of the parking spaces would not have a severe adverse impact on the transport network, and as such, the proposal is considered acceptable in regard to public and highway safety.

Conclusion

Therefore, on balance, it is considered the proposal is acceptable and would accord with the requirements of the Core Strategy, Places for Everyone and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation: Prior Approval Not Required

1

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

- Site Location Maps. Drawing number: 100. Revision: C
- Existing Site Plan. Drawing number: 200. Revision: B
- Proposed Site Plan. Drawing number: 201. Revision: D
- Existing Site Elevation. Drawing number: 300. Revision: A
- Proposed Site Elevation. Drawing number: 301. Revision: D