

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	25/00589/TEL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Maxine Wishart
<u>WARD:</u>	Prescot North	<u>PARISH:</u>	Knowsley Parish Council
<u>LOCATION:</u>	Land Adjacent To School Lane To Rear Of Peter Gilding And Co Ltd, Caddick Road, Knowsley Business Park		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	PRIOR APPROVAL DETERMINATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A 20M LATTICE TOWER WHICH WILL SUPPORT 6NO. ANTENNAS AND 3NO. RELOCATED ANTENNAS ALONG WITH ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT THERETO INCLUDING ERSS, BOBS, MHAS, AND EQUIPMENT CABIN REFRESH (REMOVAL OF THE EXISTING 15M MONOPOLE)		

Site Description

The application relates to land within the curtilage of the former Peter Gilding & Co. Ltd site on Caddick Road, Knowsley Business Park, Knowsley. The application site forms part of a large industrial building within the Business Park and is located to the north of the industrial building at the rear and facing onto the B51954 (School Lane). The existing mast and its associated equipment is located within a compound surrounded by existing palisade fencing and double access gates facing onto School Lane beyond a narrow grassed verge. There is no public footpath nor vehicular access into the site along this stretch of School Lane.

Proposal

The proposal is for a replacement telecommunications mast and associated equipment which is permitted development under the terms of Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO). The principle of the development, including the need for the facility, is therefore accepted by the legislation, and is not a matter for consideration in this application.

The application relates to an upgraded mobile base station for the mobile network operator(s) (MNOs) EE Ltd and Hutchison 3G UK Ltd, in conjunction with Mobile Broadband Network Limited (MBNL).

The proposal consists of the replacement of an existing 15m monopole with a 20m lattice tower which would support 6no. antennas and 3no. relocated antennas along with ancillary equipment and equipment cabin and removal of various other existing associated equipment.

The equipment would comprise:

- 1.2 m wide access gates cut into existing 1.8 m high palisade fencing forming compound.
- Proposed 6.0 x 6.0 x 1.2m concrete foundation.

- Removal of 15.0m high super slimline monopole.
- Installation of 20.0m high Cellnex SSTMN Base Panel 'B' lattice tower installed on foundation.
- 6no. antennas and 3no. re-located antennas.
- 1 no. SAMO cabinet on concrete base (H3G).
- 1 no. Rotary Isolator Switch in Unistrut (H3G).
- 1 no. Robust GNSS GPS Node at 3m mean height installed on existing gantry pole.
- Various feeders, fibre, cables to be installed on proposed cable management.
- Removal of various feeders (BTEE).
- **Cabin 1 (H3G & BTEE)**
 - 1 no. Airi Cabinet (7 no. 2kW rectifiers installed within equipment cabinet)(BTEE) measuring 3.0 x 1.6 x 2.9m.
 - 3 no. MK2 BOB installed on proposed cable ladder(1 per sector) within equipment cabin 1.
 - 3 no. combiners removed (H3G & BTEE)
 - 1 no. AC Distributor Board refreshed for proposed upgrade.
 - 1 no. flexi stack (H3G & BTEE) to be removed.
 - 1 no. cabinet (BTEE) to be removed.
- Proposed cable ladder complete with 1 no. gantry support pole on foundation (BTEE).
- 2 no. Proposed 900 x 900 x 3mm Earth Mat with 25mm (w) copper on surface.
- Existing meter cabinet to be refreshed for proposed upgrade.
- 1 no. earth pit (existing to be removed).
- Existing access gate (within internal area of site) to be closed for access due to proposed foundation base (BTEE).
- Removal of 450mm wide overhead cable tray with 1 no. gantry support pole (H3G & BTEE).

The applicant's supporting statement indicates that '*a replacement mast is required in this instance, as the existing mast is already developed to full capacity due to the amount of existing equipment already installed...The development entails the use of an existing site owned or managed by Cellnex UK which is in operational use and where a mast is already an established feature of the site and wider landscape...*'

The base station is required as part of a national mobile communications network, necessary to extend and improve mobile connectivity to the local area...The target coverage area has been explained and consequently the special operational and technical requirements necessitate siting of a mast within it...

Consultations

Knowsley Parish Council - No Comments Received.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 15 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice. No representations have been received.

Planning History

There have been numerous planning applications determined across the application site and the wider site of the industrial unit(s) in which the proposed development would be sited, the majority of which are not directly relevant to the current proposal. The relevant planning history is detailed below:

APP. NO:	98/00666/TEL
PROPOSAL:	INSTALLATION OF 15M HIGH SLIMLINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST, 3 NO. ANTENNAE AND 2 NO. MICROWAVE DISHES, TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT CABIN AND 2M HIGH PALISADE FENCING
DECISION:	Prior Approval Required and Granted
DECISION DATE:	23 December 1998
APP. NO:	00/00750/FUL
PROPOSAL:	REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING 15 METRE MAST WITH A 20 METRE TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST. TOGETHER WITH EQUIPMENT CABIN AND ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT.
DECISION:	Refused
DECISION DATE:	2 February 2001
APP. NO:	16/00060/TELPD
PROPOSAL:	INSTALLATION OF 1NO SAMSUNG BTS OUTDOOR (AC SAMO) 750 x 600 x 2100 HIGH CABINET ON EXTENDED CONCRETE BASE
DECISION:	Permitted Development
DECISION DATE:	9 February 2016
APP. NO:	25/00054/FUL
PROPOSAL:	PROPOSED NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS TO EXISTING MAST COMPOUND
DECISION:	Granted
DECISION DATE:	9 April 2025

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY (2016)

CS2 - Development Principles
CS4 - Economy and Employment
CS7 - Transport Networks
CS11 - Principal Regeneration Area - Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks
CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
CS20 - Managing the Borough's Historic Environment

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

EC3 - Primarily Industrial Areas
ENV8 - Telecommunications Developments

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Design Quality in New Development SPD (2016)

ASSESSMENT

Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A.3 (4) of the GPDO requires that before commencing development, the developer should apply to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the proposed development.

As the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO 2015 do not require regard be had to the development plan, or to apply the statutory duty in respect of section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, the Local Planning Authority can only have regard to the policies of the development plan and any related guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) only in so far as they are a material consideration relevant to matters of siting and appearance.

This application is therefore to assess whether a prior approval of the local planning authority will be required for the siting and appearance of the development which will be discussed below.

Background

In December 1998 prior approval was granted for the installation of a 15 m high slimline telecommunications monopole with 3 no. dual polar antennae and 2 no. microwave dishes together with associated equipment cabin and 2 m high palisade fencing (Ref: 98/00666/TEL).

In 2001 planning permission was refused for the replacement of the 15 m high mast with a 20m telecommunications mast together with equipment cabin and ancillary development (Ref: 00/00750/FUL). The reason for that refusal reads as follows:

'By reason of its height and design, the proposed development would have a

detrimental effect on the visual amenities of the surrounding area and as such would fail to comply with Government Guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts) paragraph 3.15, Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment). Paragraph 4.14 and Policy En7 (Telecommunications Development) of the Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, adopted 1998.'

Siting & Design

Policy CS2 requires that "New development in Knowsley will be expected to support the following development principles: ..." *Principle 4 c) Promoting good quality design, and ensuring that development respects its setting taking into account relevant design requirements and best practice.*"

Policy CS19 in the Core Strategy states: *"To enhance the local distinctiveness, identity and accessibility of places, new development within Knowsley will be expected to: maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, development proposals will be required to: a) Avoid unacceptable impacts on existing residents, business occupiers, and future occupiers; b) Minimise crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, including good levels of natural surveillance and security; and c) Accommodate future maintenance and long term management requirements."*

Saved Policy ENV8 in the Replacement Unitary Development Plan states that *"Proposals for new telecommunications masts and associated antennae and buildings will not be permitted unless the applicant has demonstrated that the following criteria would be satisfied:*

- a) Where the proposal is for a free standing mast, the need for the development could not, for technical reasons, be met in a more environmentally acceptable manner by:*
 - Sharing an existing mast or site,*
 - Erecting antennae on an existing building or other structure;*
- b) The development would not, by reason of its scale, siting or design, have an unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area, or the amenity of nearby residents."*

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes sections on supporting high quality communications (Section 10) and achieving well designed places (Section 12). The NPPF is a material consideration in this application,

The main issues are therefore the effect of the siting and appearance of the proposed telecommunications development on the character and appearance of the area, and if harm would occur, whether this is outweighed by the need for the installation to be sited as proposed, taking into account any suitable alternative sites.

Character and Appearance

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF advises that the number of masts should be kept to a minimum consistent with the need of consumers and efficient operation of the network and use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. It goes further

to state that “Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.”

The proposal consists of the installation of a 20m high lattice supporting a total of 9no. antennas, equipment cabinet and ancillary equipment / apparatus. The proposed equipment would be installed onto a concrete hard standing within the existing palisade enclosed compound. No detail has been submitted in regard to materials or finished colours of the proposed development.

The application site is located adjacent to School Lane, which runs east-west from Knowsley Lane to the A580 (East Lancashire Road). The site lies adjacent to a cluster of large industrial and warehouse-style buildings on Knowsley Business Park. The area to the north of the site consists of multiple industrial units and commercial premises. Directly east of the Peter Gilding building is a large agricultural field.

Further east, there is a cluster of residential properties located along School Lane, Church Walk and Maypole Court together with a commercial use occupying a previously residential property. Knowsley Village Hall and the ‘Knowsley Triangle’ (old village core) are located at the junction of School Lane and Knowsley Lane. To the south east, approx. 400m of the application site lies the Grade II Listed Building, St. Mary’s Church and further still at approx. 500m away on Tithebarn Lane sits Grade II Listed Building, Knowsley Vicarage. All of the above are located within Knowsley Village Conservation Area.

Immediately to the north there are industrial premises with a small-wooded area separating the industrial buildings from the residential properties along School Lane. To the south and west of the application site the Business Park continues with more industrial / commercial buildings. Land directly to the east and south of the Business Park is within the Green Belt.

The existing mast and associated equipment is surrounded by industrial buildings to three sides, with the equipment set behind palisade fencing with some planting to the boundary with School Lane.

Since the existing mast was erected in 1998 and permission refused in 2000, other industrial buildings on the Peter Gilding site have been built which offer some degree of screening to the proposed mast. However, the existing mast at 15m high and of slimline design currently sits above the roofline of these buildings. The proposed mast which would extend a further 5m taller and comprise a significantly wider lattice tower with bulky headframe (approx. 3.9m wide excluding antennae) which would sit significantly higher above the roofline of the surrounding buildings. It would not be successfully assimilated into its surroundings and have a jarring and incongruous presence to the detriment of visual amenity and the character of the area.

The applicant has indicated that the height and scale of the proposed development is the minimum required to meet technical requirements, and the mast has been designed to minimise its visual impact. Despite this, the height and functional appearance of the development would still appear out of place here and cause significant harm to local character.

From surrounding vantage points the proposed telecommunications mast with its associated antennas would be seen in the context of existing buildings and vertical structures, however the proposed development would result in a significant increase in height and bulk of the equipment compared to what is currently on the site and

would be much taller than the nearby buildings and street furniture. The development would be considerably wider, particularly at the top of the structure where the headframe and antennas would be mounted and would also sit higher than the trees on the opposite side of School Lane which currently provides a backdrop to the existing mast from vantage points from Knowsley Lane and from the conservation area and the surrounding Green Belt. This backdrop would do little to reduce the proposal's visual impact.

When approaching the site along School Lane, intervening buildings and vegetation currently provide some visual screen, but at the scale proposed it is considered that the surrounding structures would do little to provide any significant screening of the mast.

Saved UDP policy ENV8 states at Clause 1 (b) that *"The development would not, by reason of its scale, siting or design, have an unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area, or the amenity of nearby residents."*

Although nearby properties on School Lane and Maypole Court, their orientation prevents direct views of the proposed installation. Limited views would be possible from dwellings on Church Walk, particularly Devonshire Barn and, to a lesser extent due to window layout, Dove Cottage (formerly Nevesmere Cottage). These views would be somewhat restricted by the distance of approximately 250–265m.

Nonetheless, the proposed installation would appear as a large and prominent piece of infrastructure with a height and appearance that would be out of scale with the surrounding built form, street furniture and vegetation. Owing to its siting and appearance, area. Overall, it is considered that the siting of the lattice tower and equipment would be a dominant feature that would be obtrusive in this location and visually harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

Alternative Sites

It is necessary to consider whether alternative siting options exist for the equipment that could deliver the required functionality while mitigating the identified visual harm in order to minimise adverse effects on the character and appearance of the area.

In accordance with Paragraph 120 of the NPPF (NPPF) and the Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (2022), operators are required to prioritise reuse of existing telecommunications infrastructure to minimise environmental and visual impacts. Under Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan policy ENV8, proposals for new telecommunications masts must demonstrate that technical need cannot be met in a more environmentally acceptable way by:

- Sharing an existing mast or site, or
- Installing antennae on an existing building or structure.

This application proposes a replacement mast at the same location of an existing installation. The applicant has put forward that they consider the site selection to meet *'national objectives for shared use of existing electronic communications masts and sites...'* It is Officer's view that in principle this rationale, ensures the proposal aligns with both national and local policy expectations for site sharing and reuse. However, having regard to these considerations, officers are not persuaded that there are no available alternatives which would be less harmful than the proposed

siting.

The need for the installation is established by statutory provisions, which confer a degree of weight in favour of the development. However, it is necessary to consider the extent of harm arising from the proposal. In this instance, the installation would result in a noticeable visual impact within the area, which must be balanced against the operational requirements of the development. It is officer's view that this does not outweigh the concerns in relation to the character and appearance of the area.

Public Health Considerations

The application is supported by a Declaration of Conformity with International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Public Exposure Guidelines to confirm that the proposed equipment would not exceed the guidelines for public exposure. The proposal therefore meets the requirements of paragraph 122 of the NPPF in relation to public health.

As such, health is not a material planning consideration in this instance given that this application is for prior approval (with only matters of siting and appearance to be considered); and in any event the telecommunications operator has confirmed that the international guidelines will be met, which PHE and the government indicate should satisfy local planning authorities that a telecommunications installation is safe.

This represents a lack of harm, but does not outweigh the concerns in relation to siting and appearance.

Other Matters

Noise

The supporting planning statement indicates at para. 3.4 that *'the proposed radio equipment housing will need to be mechanically ventilated to avoid overheating of equipment. The ventilation equipment is only likely to operate during the day during hot weather. If it is considered specific noise attenuation measures to be necessary, we would be pleased to discuss practicable solutions'*. It is noted however, that there appears to be an anomaly in that submitted plan (UKMY005554-02-101-MD003 Rev. 3) is annotated to state: *'Cooling: The cooling requirement for this site is 3.5kW. Therefore, the existing cooling system is sufficient'*

Nevertheless, while the GPDO does include responsibilities in relation to noise for certain classes of permitted development, it is not a requirement of Part 16 and the applicant is not required to provide details of noise impacts of the development. Therefore, noise conditions would not generally be permissible under prior approval because noise is not one of the matters for consideration. Nevertheless, given the siting of the equipment within an industrial environment and the separation from residential properties, noise impacts are unlikely to be significant but should noise issues arise following if prior approval is granted, this can be addressed under other statutory provisions.

Benefits of the Development

The applicant submits that the proposal relates to an upgraded mobile base station for the mobile network operator(s) (MNOs) as part of a national mobile

communications network, necessary to extend and improve mobile connectivity to the local area. The supporting documents go on to say that a replacement mast is required in this instance, as the existing mast is already developed to full capacity due to the amount of existing equipment already installed.

The proposed development would utilise the *'MNOs existing 3G and 4G networks such as the base station already existing at the application site. As such, the application site is likely to carry different mobile connectivity services in parallel, with high data uses operating through the new higher capacity network apparatus subject of this application.'*

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF highlights the importance of advanced high quality and reliable communications infrastructure which is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.

The applicant has identified various social and economic benefits of the proposal. It is acknowledged that these matters are important, however the provisions of the GPDO mean that, in assessing this application proposal, the Local Planning Authority are only able to consider matters of siting and appearance.

The supporting information highlights the benefits of the proposal in the public interest in improving the vital network. The applicant advances that the benefits that would flow make the proposal a significant and major contribution towards sustainable objectives. These benefits are not disputed and as noted in Paragraph 119 of the NPPF, advanced high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being.

Paragraph 120 advises that the number of masts should be kept to a minimum consistent with the need of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. It goes further to state that *'Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.'*

The provision upgrade of the services would together increase network capacity and the development would be of social and economic benefit to individuals, businesses, and public services alike and these factors should therefore weigh in favour of the development. It is Officer's view that this does not outweigh the concerns in relation to character and appearance.

Conclusion

It is acknowledged that there are benefits associated with the proposed development and these weigh in favour of the proposed development. Paragraph 119 of the NPPF clearly highlights the importance of advanced high quality and reliable communications infrastructure, and the applicant has identified various social and economic benefits of the proposal. Officers do not contend that these matters are important.

However, the provisions of the GPDO mean that, in assessing this application the

LPA are only able to consider matters of siting and appearance. Consequently, these benefits do not outweigh the significant harm found that the siting and appearance of the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.

For the reasons outlined above, the siting and appearance of the proposed development are not acceptable and the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS2, CS19 and CS20 of the Local Plan:Core Strategy and saved Policy ENV8 of the UDP together with guidance in the NPPF.

Recommendation

The Council has determined that pursuant to Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the applicant be informed that prior approval is required and refused for the following reason:-

1. The proposed development by reason of its location, height and prominence would form a highly visible and dominant development which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area and street scene. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS2, CS19 and CS20 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted January 2016 and saved Policy ENV8 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006 together with guidance in NPPF (2025).

Signed Case Officer¹: **M Wishart**

Signed Authorising Officer²: **Alan Kilroe**

Date: **17 December 2025**

¹ I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

² I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed