

Report for Resolution

Report to Planning Applications Committee
Date 17 May, 2012
Report of Head of Planning Services
Subject 12/00594/FT Proposed Telecommunications Mast
Adjacent To 1C Guardian Road Industrial Estate Guardian
Road Norwich

Item
5(5)

SUMMARY

Description:	Installation of a radio base station consisting of a 17.5m slim-line column supporting 6 No. 3G antennas, 1 No. equipment cabinet and ancillary development.
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objections
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	Wensum
Contact Officer:	Mrs Caroline Dodden Planner 01603 212503
Valid Date:	21st March 2012
Applicant:	Vodafone Limited
Agent:	Mrs Jennie Hann

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The application site is an area of land immediately to the north-west corner of a large industrial building, No. 1C Guardian Road Industrial Estate. There is a service yard positioned on the south side of the building, which forms the south-western corner of the industrial estate.
2. Land to the south and east of the building is set approximately 2.5 m higher than the industrial site. Residential dwellings are situated directly to the south of the industrial estate (Bowthorpe Road and Apsley Court) and smaller single storey industrial units are located directly to the north of the site at the same ground level. Further north is the NELM (N. Earlham Larkman Marlpit) Development Trust running track (which is set down approximately 2 m) and associated community park.
3. To the west of the site is the Earlham Fire Station building. Undeveloped land is situated directly to the south of this building. This land has a lapsed planning consent for a two storey office building on the northern part of the site (ref: 07/00785/F) and an extension of time application was granted in July 2011 (ref: 09/00035/F & 11/00819/ET) for the erection of a 60 bed care home on the southern

part of the site.

4. The Henderson Business Centre is located to the north of the Fire Station. It is made up of small single storey light industrial units (B1 use class) and a two storey office building.
5. Residential dwellings and a grassed area is located immediately to the west side of Ivy Road.

Constraints

6. The application site is situated on the western edge of an identified General Employment Area.

Topography

7. The application site sits approximately 2-3 metres lower than land to the west and south of the industrial estate.
8. The land generally slopes down northwards towards the Dereham Road.

Planning History

08/01106/FT – Proposed 20 metre telecommunication monopole, communication dish and antenna, with ancillary apparatus positioned at the base of the mast with a fenced compound. Refused under delegated powers, October 2008.

09/00326/FT – Installation of 20 metre slim-line lattice tower within a fenced compound along with ground based equipment cabinets. Refused under delegated powers, June 2009.

Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

The Proposal

9. To install a telecommunications radio base station consisting of a 17.5 metre slim-line column supporting 6 no. 3G antennas and an equipment cabinet within a fenced compound. Two telecommunications operators would share the base station.

Representations Received

10. Advertised on site (4 site notices) and adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing.
 - Twelve letters of representation have been received - nine from residential households, one from NELM Development Trust Ltd and one from Henderson Green Community Primary School;

- A petition with 15 signatures;
- Forty-eight standard letters signed by forty-five households and one business from within the Henderson Business Centre;
- Joint representation from Councillors Ruth Makoff, Lucy Galvin and Marcus Helmsley;

The above representations have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below:

11.

Issues Raised	Response
The development would detract and adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding residential areas, nearby community park, Henderson Green Primary School and Headmasters Garden being visibly imposing and out of character.	See paragraphs 31 to 35
Potential adverse affects on health (Stewart Report advises precautionary approach) and property values.	Paragraphs 15, 20
Consider there is not a need for the mast, as current coverage is very good.	Paragraph 15
The mast would be visible well above the tree line and undermine the on-going environmental improvements and positive impact being made to the former Bowthorpe School site.	Paragraphs 31 to 35
Until phone masts are proven not to be hazardous to health such a proposal should not be allowed in or next to areas of high public use. A care home for the elderly is also planned nearby.	Paragraph 15, 20
Henderson Green Community Primary school is taking over part of the NELM land for playing field use, which brings the school grounds much closer to the proposed site.	Paragraph 15, 20, 21, 22
The perception of potential risk would be detrimental to the continued growth and development of the school.	Paragraph 15, 20, 21, 22
One of the trees to the west of the site has been removed meaning the mast will be more visible and spoil what is currently a pleasurable view.	Paragraph 28
Previous reasons for refusal have not been overcome and so it would be inconsistent for the Council to approve this application having previously refused several previous applications.	Paragraphs 29, 30
Evidence is not provided to show all other	Paragraphs 18, 19

possibilities of site location have been satisfactorily exhausted.	
The development will cause widespread physical interference and disruption to existing television and other telecommunication services.	Paragraph 23
Basic human right to be safe in own home.	Paragraph 20

Consultation Responses

12. No formal internal or external consultations were undertaken.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

Statement 5 - supporting high quality communications infrastructure

Statement 7 – requiring good design

Relevant policies of the adopted East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2008

ENV7 – Quality in the built environment

Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2011

Policy 2 – Promoting good design

Relevant saved policies of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004

HBE12 – High quality of design

HBE20 – Telecommunications equipment

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

13. Statement 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which came into effect in March 2012, sets out national guidance for the development of communications infrastructure. Paragraph 43 states that ‘existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used, unless the need for a new site has been justified. When new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where possible.’
14. Paragraph 45 of the NPPF states that, applications for telecommunications development for a new mast or base station should include evidence that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure and submit a statement that certifies that International Commission (IC) guidelines would be met.
15. Paragraph 46 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. This should not question the need for the telecommunications system, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets

ICNRP guidelines for public exposure.

16. Statement 7 of the NPPF, Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk and Saved Local Plan Policy HBE12 promote good design for all new developments.
17. Saved Local Plan Policy HBE20 states that the development of telecommunications installations and equipment will be permitted subject to a number of criteria. These include, minimising their visual impact, including provision of appropriate landscaping around them, taking account of amenity considerations to adjoining uses and their sensitivity and agreeing to share a mast with other operators requiring such a site.

Consideration of alternative sites

18. In line with Paragraphs 43 and 45 of the NPPF, the Applicant submitted details of alternative sites investigated giving justifications as to why these were unacceptable. One of the ten sites identified was the existing '3' site at the junction of Gypsy Lane and Farrow Road. However, its existing design would not support two further operators and a replacement mast would significantly alter the scale and design, which was considered to be more prominent in the streetscene and have a greater impact on residential amenity.
19. The other sites looked at were a mixture of highway land sites, a rooftop site and sites associated with an existing user, for example the Fire Station at Ivy Road. These sites were discounted for a number of reasons including the unwillingness of the landowner and physical constraints.

Concerns regarding health

20. As outlined in paragraph 15 of this report, the issue of health safeguards are not a key consideration for the determination of planning applications, provided that conformity with the IC guidelines for non-ionising radiation and public exposure (ICNRP) has been demonstrated. A certificate has been submitted by the Applicant meeting this requirement.
21. In order to allay perceived fears on health grounds, additional information was submitted relating to the two schools that are situated within 250 metres of the application site. Site calculations have been undertaken to estimate the highest possible frequency fields from the proposed installation. It assumes that all channels are transmitting at full power, but realistically, day to day measurements would be much lower.
22. The calculations demonstrate that the highest exposure from the installation would be 0.068% of the ICNRP guidelines and would be located 23 metres from the proposed antenna at a bearing of 0, 120 and 240 degrees. Whilst it is not accurately known the full extent of the grounds of the Henderson Green Community Primary School, it is calculated that the school's playground is a distance of approximately 350 metres and the community football pitch area and running track are respectively a distance of approximately 130 metres from the proposed application site. In addition, the Norwich Steiner School on Bowthorpe Road is over 200 metres from the site. Therefore, both schools are a long distance from the area of highest frequency of the proposed mast.

Interference

23. It is understood that different telecommunications operators and other commercial operators use different frequencies that do not cause wide spread interference with each other. It should be noted that this matter is not a material planning consideration, but was raised by a local resident.

Siting and Design

24. The proposed base station would be located adjacent to the north-west corner of a large industrial building. This unit sits in the south-western corner of the Guardian Road Industrial Estate, which is surrounded by a mixture of uses from residential uses bounding the south side of the estate to other commercial uses to the north, east and west.
25. There is an area of undeveloped land to the south west of the site, which has a lapsed planning consent for a two storey office building to the north part of the site and a 60 bed car home to the southern part. The latter has been the subject of an extension of time application (application no. 11/00819/ET) that was granted consent in July 2011.
26. The industrial building is set approximately 2.5 metres lower than the land to the south and west, which means that it is mainly the roof of the building that is seen from these directions. The top of the proposed mast would be 3 metres above the ridge of the industrial building with the shrouded antennas being the only part above the treetops.
27. There is a belt of trees that extends along the western boundary of the industrial building that gives reasonable screening to the industrial buildings when viewed from the west. This group of trees form a specific part of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) no. 377.
28. It is apparent that one tree has recently been removed adjacent to the application site. The Council's Tree Protection Officer is currently investigating the alleged contravention to the TPO.
29. At 17.5 metres (from the ground level of the industrial estate), the proposed telecommunications column would be the minimum height technically possible. The design of the mast would have a diameter of 324mm, which is similar to nearby street light columns and telegraph poles. The antennas would be positioned behind a shroud at the top of the column.
30. It is considered that the proposed scale and design is acceptable for the application site, which minimises its potential impact on the wider area.

Visual Impact

31. Taking account of the level of concern raised in the representations submitted, great care has been taken in assessing the visual impact of the proposal. As is the case with most proposed developments, there is likely to be some degree of visual impact, however, it is the significance of that impact that requires careful consideration.
32. Having viewed the application site from the surrounding area, particularly from the north, west and south, it is considered that the majority of views from residential properties (for example, from Tollhouse Road (300 metres approximately), Ivy Road (130 metres approximately) and Dereham Road (300 metres approximately)), would be over a relatively long distance and most views partially screened by trees and commercial buildings and set against the wider context of the industrial estate.
33. It is considered that the properties immediately to the south of the industrial estate, at Apsley Court and Bowthorpe Road would have closer views of the proposed mast, being between approximately 85 to 100 metres away. However, within this context, many of the dwellings (Apsley Court in particular) have mature landscaping situated at the northern boundary with the industrial estate, which provides valuable screening.
34. There would also be longer views from the running track to the north and from parts of the community park, most notably from the football pitch area, to the west, which

would again be set in the context of the surrounding trees and industrial buildings.
35. Taking particular account of the long distances of the majority of the views and the specific design and setting of the proposed mast, it is considered that the visual impact would not be significantly detrimental to the visual appearance of the surrounding area.

Conclusions

74. After due consideration, it is considered that the proposed telecommunications radio base station would be of an acceptable design and scale that would minimise its impact in the wider area and, set against the adjacent industrial building and trees, it would not be significantly detrimental to the visual appearance of the surrounding area.

75. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would accord with guidance within Statements 5 and 7 of the NPPF, Policy 2 of the JCS for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk and Saved Local Plan Policies HBE12 and HBE20 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan.

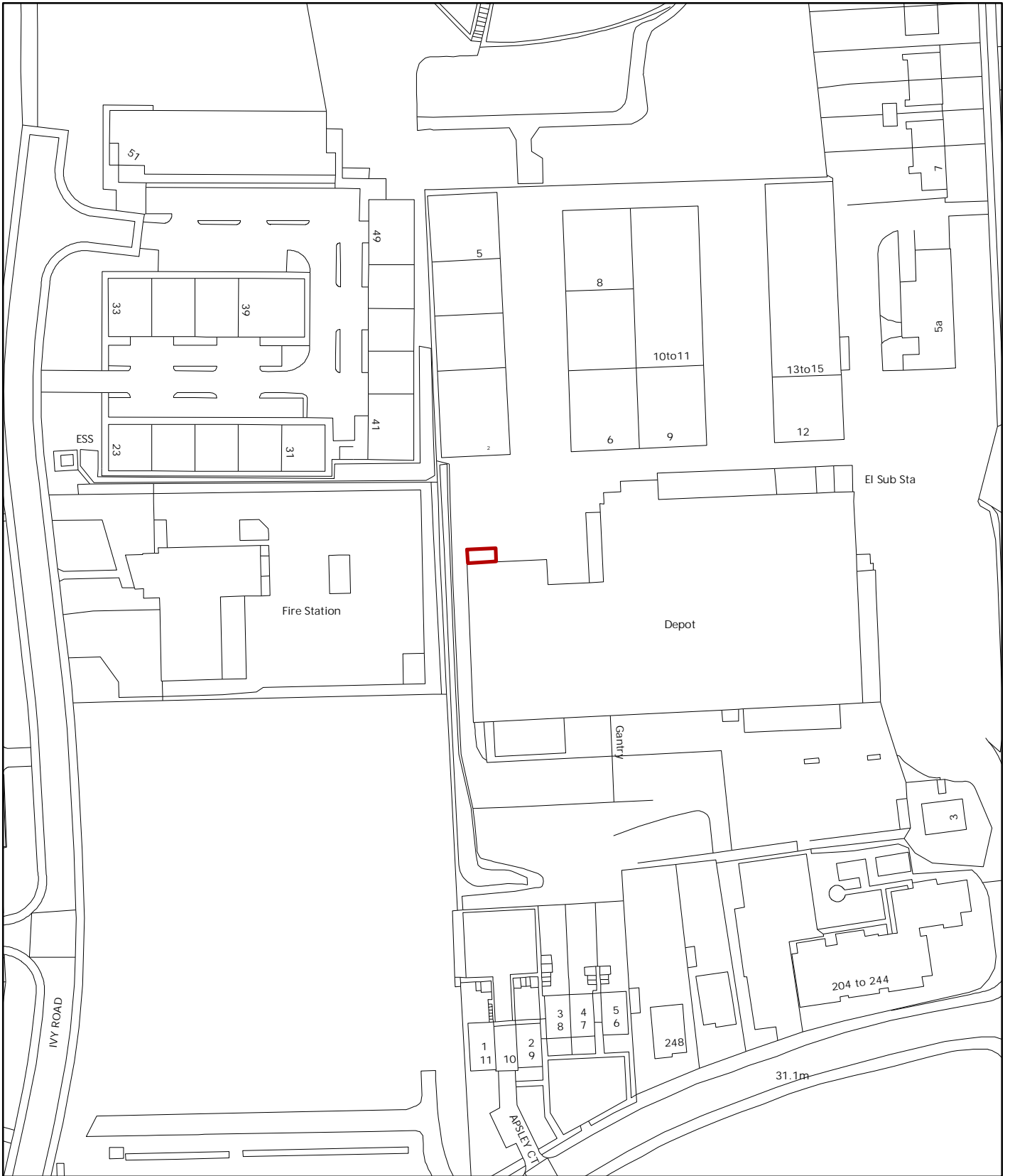
RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve application no 12/00594/FT 'Installation of a radio base station consisting of a 17.5m slim-line column supporting 6 No. 3G antennas, 1 No. equipment cabinet and ancillary development' and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement of development with three years of the date of this permission.
2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

Reasons for approval:

The decision is made with regard to Statements 5 and 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, adopted March 2011 and Saved Local Plan Policies HBE12 and HBE20 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, Adopted Version November 2004 and to all material considerations. The design, scale and siting of the telecommunications radio base station is acceptable and due to its location and setting, being close to a number of commercial buildings and adjacent to a group of mature trees, the telecommunications mast would not have a significantly detrimental visual impact on the wider area.



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Planning Application No 12/00594/FT

Site Address

Proposed Telecommunication Mast adjacent to 1c Guardian Road Industrial Estate

Scale

1:1,250



NORWICH
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES

