

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Alex Howard.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
24/01803/TD	Replacement of existing 15m monopole with 20m monopole with wraparound ground based equipment cabinet supporting 9 no antennas, together with the removal of 2 no existing equipment cabinets, and the addition of 3 no new cabinets and ancillary development thereto.	Telecommunication Mast On Stotfold Road Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 4JR

Submitted Plan Nos

002 100 150 200 250

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 None.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation** – None received.

3.2 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

3.3 **Environmental Health** – No Objection.

3.4 **Hertfordshire Highways** – No objection subject to conditions.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site is a grass verge on the west side of Stotfold Road, Letchworth. The site consists of a single 15.0m mast and associated ground-based cabinets. The site is within the Green Belt.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 The application proposes the replacement of existing 15m monopole with 20m monopole with wraparound ground-based equipment cabinet supporting 9 no antennas, together with the removal of 2 no existing equipment cabinets, and the addition of 3 no new cabinets and ancillary development thereto.

4.2.2 This application has been assessed against the General (Permitted Development) Order 2015 Schedule 2, Part 16; Class A – Communications. As such, the proposal constitutes ***Class A (a) - the installation, alteration or replacement of any electronic communications apparatus.***

4.2.3 Conditions A2 (3) states: ***Subject to sub-paragraph (5), Class A development—***

(a)on article 2(3) land, excluding development specified in sub-paragraph (4);

(b)on land which is, or is within, a site of special scientific interest; F14...

(c)on unprotected land where that development consists of—

(i)the installation of a mast, other than the installation of a mast on a building where the height of the mast (including any antenna and supporting apparatus) does not exceed the height of the highest part of the building by more than 6 metres];

(ii)the alteration or replacement of a mast, other than on a building, which, when completed—

(aa)is taller than the mast which existed prior to such alteration or replacement; and

(bb)exceeds a height of [25] metres above ground level excluding any antenna];

(iia)the alteration or replacement of a mast, other than on a building,] which—

(aa)is less than one metre wide where the mast would, when altered or replaced, exceed the original width of the mast by two thirds; or

(bb)is one metre wide or wider where the mast would, when altered or replaced, exceed the original width of the mast by more than one half or 2 metres, whichever is the greater; or]

(iii)the construction, installation, alteration or replacement of radio equipment housing, where the volume of any single development, other than a single development within a permitted compound,] exceeds 2.5 cubic metres

(d)on a highway where that development consists of—

(i)the alteration or replacement of a mast, other than on a building, which, when completed—

(aa)is taller than the mast which existed prior to such alteration or replacement; and

(bb)exceeds a height of 20 metres above ground level excluding any antenna;

(ii)the alteration or replacement of a mast which—

(aa)is less than one metre wide where the mast would, when altered or replaced, exceed the original width of the mast by two thirds; or

(bb)is one metre wide or wider where the mast would, when altered or replaced, exceed the original width of the mast by more than one half or 2 metres, whichever is the greater; or

(e)which consists of the installation, alteration or replacement of a mast on a defence safeguarding area].

is permitted subject, except in case of emergency (in which case only paragraph A.3(12) applies), to the conditions set out in paragraph A.3 (prior approval).

- 4.2.4 The site is on a highway and the existing pole measures approx. 0.3m wide. The proposed mast measures approx. 0.45m wide but it set within a base cabinet that measures approx. 1.8m wide. Under Part 16 Class A of the GPDO, 'width' in relation to a mast, is defined as the width of the mast as its widest point, excluding any antenna and including any antenna support structures. As such, the definition does not clearly exclude the base cabinet from the width considerations. On that basis, the proposed mast would exceed the original width of the mast by two thirds, contrary to (d) ii) (aa).
- 4.2.5 Therefore, the development is permitted subject to the prior approval from the Local Planning Authority. Therefore, the proposal will be assessed on the siting and appearance of the development.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key issues in this case are the siting and appearance of the proposed development and the impact it has on the area.
- 4.3.2 Paragraph 118 of the NPPF states that *"Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure 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"*. Paragraph 119 states that *"Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. 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"*.
- 4.3.3 The site comprises an existing mast measuring 15.0m in height, with a number of associated cabinets and supporting infrastructure. The site is immediately adjacent to a footpath and Stotfold Road, with a cemetery to the west, open fields to the north and east, and residential properties approx. 80.0m away due south.
- 4.3.4 The proposal looks to replace the 15.0m mast with a 20.0m mast, including wraparound ground-based equipment cabinet supporting 9 no antennas. The location of the proposed mast will be the exact same place as the existing, with the associated ground-based cabinets in similar locations to the existing. The mast will be wider than the existing mast with more antenna.
- 4.3.5 Having considered the siting and appearance of the proposed replacement mast compared to the existing mast, the development is considered acceptable. The mast will be erected in the same location as the existing mast, which is encouraged in National policy, and whilst it will be 5.0m taller than the existing mast, the site is a fairly isolated location from residential neighbours (approx. 80m away) and any other neighbouring built form to the north and west. The mast has the external appearance of typical modern masts, which are wider and incorporate more visible antenna in the upper half of the mast, which in this context is not considered unreasonable in terms of its appearance. The associated ground-based apparatus is low level and are considered acceptable. It is recommended that the ground-based apparatus and indeed the replace mast are finished in an Olive Green colour, to allow the utilitarian, stark development to blend in with its surroundings and the trees to the rear in line with paragraph 119 of the NPPF.

- 4.3.6 It is noted that the Highway Authority have responded with no objections subject to conditions, relating to the submission of a Construction Method Statement and Servicing and Maintenance Plan prior to commencement. However, transport and highway matters are not within the scope of this prior approval application, as it is only siting and appearance; so these conditions cannot be considered or enforced.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 It is considered that the siting and appearance of the proposed development is acceptable.

5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That prior approval be **GIVEN** for the following reason.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 24 September 2024	