

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 19TH November 2008

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	08/00806/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	26/11/08
WARD/PARISH:	Cockerton East - Darlington
LOCATION:	Darlington Railway Athletic Club, Brinkburn Road, Darlington.
DESCRIPTION:	20 metre high Monopole Telecommunication Mast and associated equipment cabinets.
APPLICANT:	T Mobile.

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

This proposal relates to the following development :

- Replacement of an existing sports field floodlight column with a 20 metre high galvanised steel Monopole Telecommunication Mast (including replacement floodlight) and associated equipment cabinets.

The site lies within the Athletic Club boundary and is close to the existing clubhouse adjacent Brinkburn Road. The site is currently occupied by a floodlighting column and is screened from direct public view by a screen fence along the roadside boundary.

The nearest dwellings are located some 50 metres away on Brinkburn Road however aged persons' accommodation is located some 150 metres to the west which faces onto the Athletic ground and application site.

PLANNING HISTORY

A number of proposals have been approved since the mid 1970s such as changing rooms, floodlights, spectator seating and advertisements however these do not affect the consideration of the current proposal.

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

Government guidance on the provision of telecommunications development is contained within PPG 8 – Telecommunications 2001. It is Government policy to encourage the growth of telecommunication systems whilst ensuring the environmental impact is kept to a minimum and that public health is protected.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

A site notice was posted and local residents consulted.

At the time of drafting two letters of objection have been received raising the following issues

1. Possible intrusion from noise from the mast installation
2. Mast will be higher than the existing floodlight poles
3. Mast will be visually intrusive
4. Health hazards to users of the adjacent sports pitches.

Highways Officer – No objections.

Environmental Health Officer – After discussions with the applicants, no objections are raised to the proposed development. On the issue of potential health hazards from the proposal the following comments are made::

Regarding health issues, you will be aware of the statement in section 30 of PPG8, which states that in the Government's view, if a proposed mobile phone base station meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for a local planning authority, in processing an application for planning permission or prior approval, to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them. The applicant has provided a Declaration of Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines.

PLANNING ISSUES

It is considered that the main planning issues relating to this application are :

1. Visual impact and
2. Possible health implications.

Visual Impact

The proposed development consists of a 20 metre high galvanised steel Monopole Telecommunication Mast (including replacement floodlight) and associated equipment cabinets. This will replace an existing slightly smaller floodlighting pole which is one of a number that surround the adjacent football pitch. Unlike some other lattice type masts, the monopole design tends to be less visually intrusive and this taken with the context of the surroundings within which this proposal is located needs to be taken into account when considering the visual impact of the proposal. It is considered that bearing in mind the close proximity of a number of similarly designed floodlighting poles and the overall scale and design of the proposed mast, the visual impact of the development will be minimised and will not visually intrude into the locality to an unacceptable degree. Furthermore the impact on nearby residents will be reduced due to the separation distance of some 50 metres and the intervening club house building. Visual impact on the properties to the west, some 150 metres away, is not considered to be materially intrusive.

Health Implications

The Environmental Health Officer has commented above, having no objections to the proposal and considers that the applicants have complied with the necessary guidelines. On this issue the applicants have commented as follows :

The public perception of health risks can be material considerations within the land use planning systems. The weight to be attached to this issue has to be determined accordingly in each case. However, it has been held and widely established at planning appeals and in recent high court cases that health consideration alone are not sufficient basis for withholding planning permissions, notwithstanding any views the Council may have adopted about current research, providing it has been demonstrated that the proposed installation will comply with ICNIRP guidelines.

The requisite ICNIRP certificate is submitted with the application confirming that the emissions fall within the required guidelines.

The most recent government advice concerning mobile phone technology and health concerns about them is contained in the revised PPG 8 (2001), which states:

Para 98 – It is the Government's firm view that the planning system is not the appropriate mechanism for determining health safeguards. It remains central government's responsibility to decide what measures are necessary to protect public health. In the Government view if a proposed development meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for a local planning authority in processing an application for planning permission or prior approval, to consider further the health aspects or concerns about them.

In view of the above therefore it is concluded that there are no material planning reasons to object to the proposals on public health grounds.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the visual impact of the proposal is reduced in view of its monopole design and its location close to a number of similar structures surrounding the adjacent football ground. It is also considered to be of sufficient distance from and screened from nearby residential properties not to cause loss of amenity to the occupiers.

In view of the comments of the Environmental Health Officer and guidance contained within PPG 8 Telecommunications, there are considered to be no public health issues associated with this proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

That Planning Permission be granted with the following conditions:

1. A3 – Time limit
2. B5 – Accordance with plans

SUGGESTED SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The decision to grant planning permission has been taken having regard to the policies and guidance contained within PPG 8 Telecommunications together with information received as a result of consultation.