
Committee Date:	13/11/2014	Application Number:	2014/07288/PA
Accepted:	07/10/2014	Application Type:	Telecommunications Determination
Target Date:	01/12/2014		
Ward:	Billesley		

School Road, Adjacent to Warstock Community Centre, Yardley Wood, Birmingham, B14 4BP

Application for Prior Notification for the installation of a replacement 8.2 metre high monopole and associated equipment cabinet.

Applicant: Hutchinson & EE Ltd
c/o The Agent
Agent: WHP Wilkinson Helsby
The Ponderosa, Scotland Lane, Horsforth, Leeds, LS18 5SF

Recommendation

No Prior Approval Required

1. Proposal

- 1.1. This is a prior notification application for the installation of a replacement 8.2m high telecommunications monopole and 1no new ground based equipment cabinet to be located on the grass verge on to the southwest of the roundabout which forms the junction of School Road, Yardley Wood Road and Daisy Farm Road, Yardley Wood.
- 1.2. The proposed monopole would replace an existing 8m high telecommunications monopole at the same location, 0.55m from the edge of pavement. The applicant has explained that replacement equipment is required to upgrade the site to enable 4G coverage to be provided, and to allow the current operator H3G to share the site with a second operator - EE.
- 1.3. The proposed monopole would accommodate the shared antennae of both EE Ltd and H3G UK Ltd. It would have a diameter of 0.2m, with the antennae shroud having a diameter of 0.4m. It would be sited close to the edge of the footpath and would be constructed of steel, finished in light grey.
- 1.4. A new equipment cabinet would be installed to the side of the monopole. This would measure 1.2m in length, 0.3m in width and 1m in height. It would be constructed of galvanised steel, finished in light grey.
- 1.5. The applicant states the proposed equipment would be ICNIRP-compliant (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection).

[Proposed elevation](#)

[Proposed site plan](#)

2. Site & Surroundings

- 2.1. The application site is located immediately to the southwest of the roundabout, which forms the junction of School Road, Yardley Wood Road and Daisy Farm Road.
- 2.2. Immediately to the south west is the Warstock Community Centre, further to the south west, approximately 50m from the site is the Highters Heath Junior, Infant and Nursery School. To the south east is a petrol filling station and Yardley Wood Baptist Church. To the north west and north east of the roundabout there are parades of shops. Beyond these uses there are residential properties.
- 2.3. The site of the proposed mast is fairly open and exposed and views are afforded of the site from all directions. Aside from the mast to be replaced, there are four associated equipment cabinets.

[Location map](#)

[Street view](#)

3. Planning History

- 3.1. 14/02/2003 – 2003/00081/PA Installation of 8m slimline monopole and equipment cabin. Refused. Allowed at appeal 23/07/2003.
- 3.2. 26/11/2004 – 2004/05673/PA Replacement of existing 8m high slimline monopole with 12m high slimline monopole. Approved with conditions.

4. Consultation/PP Responses

- 4.1. Transportation Development - No objection.
- 4.2. Letters of notification have been sent to surrounding occupiers, local residents associations, Billesley Ward Councillors, the Planning Committee member from the Selly Oak Constituency, and the MP for Selly Oak. No comments have been received.

5. Policy Context

- 5.1. The following local policies are applicable:
 - The Birmingham Unitary Development Plan (2005)
 - Draft Birmingham Development Plan (2013)
 - Telecommunications Development: Mobile Phone Infrastructure SPD
- 5.2. The following national policies are applicable:
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1. This is a prior notification application. As such, the only issues that can be considered when assessing this application are the siting and appearance of the proposed monopole and cabinet.

- 6.2. Paragraphs 42-46 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) relate to the installation of telecommunications equipment. Paragraph 43 advises that local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks but should aim to keep the numbers of telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network. It explains that existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used, unless the need for a new site has been justified and that where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.
- 6.3. Paragraph 46 advises that “Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the telecommunications system, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure”
- 6.4. The Telecommunications Policy (Paras. 8.55-8.55C) in the Birmingham UDP (2005) and the Telecommunications Development SPD state that a modern and comprehensive telecommunications system is an essential element in the life of the local community and the economy of the City but that in assessing applications for telecommunications equipment, account will be taken of the impact of radio masts, antennae and ancillary structures on existing landscape features, buildings and the outlook from neighbouring properties. In respect of ground-based masts, the Council's SPD advises that they should make the most of existing screening or backdrop to buildings and avoid open locations, that they should be mitigated by landscaping and planting, that street locations will be discouraged but where they are the only option they should appear as an unobtrusive addition, and where possible sites should have a backdrop of trees to reduce visual contrast.
- 6.5. Policy 8.55B requires operators to share masts wherever possible, and the proposal fully accords with this policy because EE and H3G would incorporate antennas on the same monopole.
- 6.6. In approving Planning Appeal APP/P4605/A/03/1113447 for the existing 8m high mast in 2003, the Inspector noted the “because of the wide grass verges on the vicinity of the roundabout, the monopole would be visible within a considerable area. From every vantage point, however, it would be seen in the context of several lamp standards. Whilst it would be recognised as a different sort of structure, it would not in my view be as discordant as to be perceived as an alien structure or intrusive landscape feature. For this reason, I conclude that it confirms with policy 3.10 of the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan (2005)”. The inspector went on to state that the wider surroundings of the site is as a residential area and therefore a sensitive area in terms of the Council's policy. However, as the appellant confirmed that the proposed development would operate within the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to emissions from the antennae, he considered there was no reason to suppose that direct harm to health would arise. Given this, the inspector concluded that the proposed siting not to be insensitive.
- 6.7. Bearing in mind the above, I consider the key issue in determining this current application is whether the change in design of the monopole, the increase in thickness of the proposed monopole by 0.2m at its base and 0.1m at its shroud, and the increase in height by 0.2m when compared to the existing approved monopole, would be material and would have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

- 6.8. Although the additional thickness and height of the of the proposed monopole, when compared to the existing situation, would make the mast appear more noticeable in the streetscene and in long distance views of the site, I do not consider the increase would be so different from the existing situation as to substantiate a reason for refusal on visual amenity grounds. Similarly, the proposed equipment cabinet, whilst adding additional clutter to the street, would not be of such a size that it could be argued that, combined with the existing four cabinets, it would have a significant detrimental impact on visual amenity.
- 6.9. Although highly visible within the street, the mast would be sited in a position where it would not be particularly clearly visible from, or located adjacent to, primary windows of the nearest residential properties. No.1072 Yardley Wood Road is directly opposite, to the west but is well screened on its western boundary by a high brick wall. Other properties are set at oblique angles and with views obscured by existing street furniture and by intervening trees. Therefore, I do not consider the siting and appearance of the proposal would unduly affect residents' amenity.
- 6.10. Transportation Development have raised no objection to the proposal and I concur that the proposed equipment would not cause any obstruction to highway users.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. I consider that the siting and appearance of the proposed replacement monopole and new equipment cabinet would not have an undue effect on the visual amenity of the area. In the context of national and local planning policies, and given the application site already hosts established telecommunications equipment, there are no reasons for refusal of this proposal.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. No Prior Approval Required

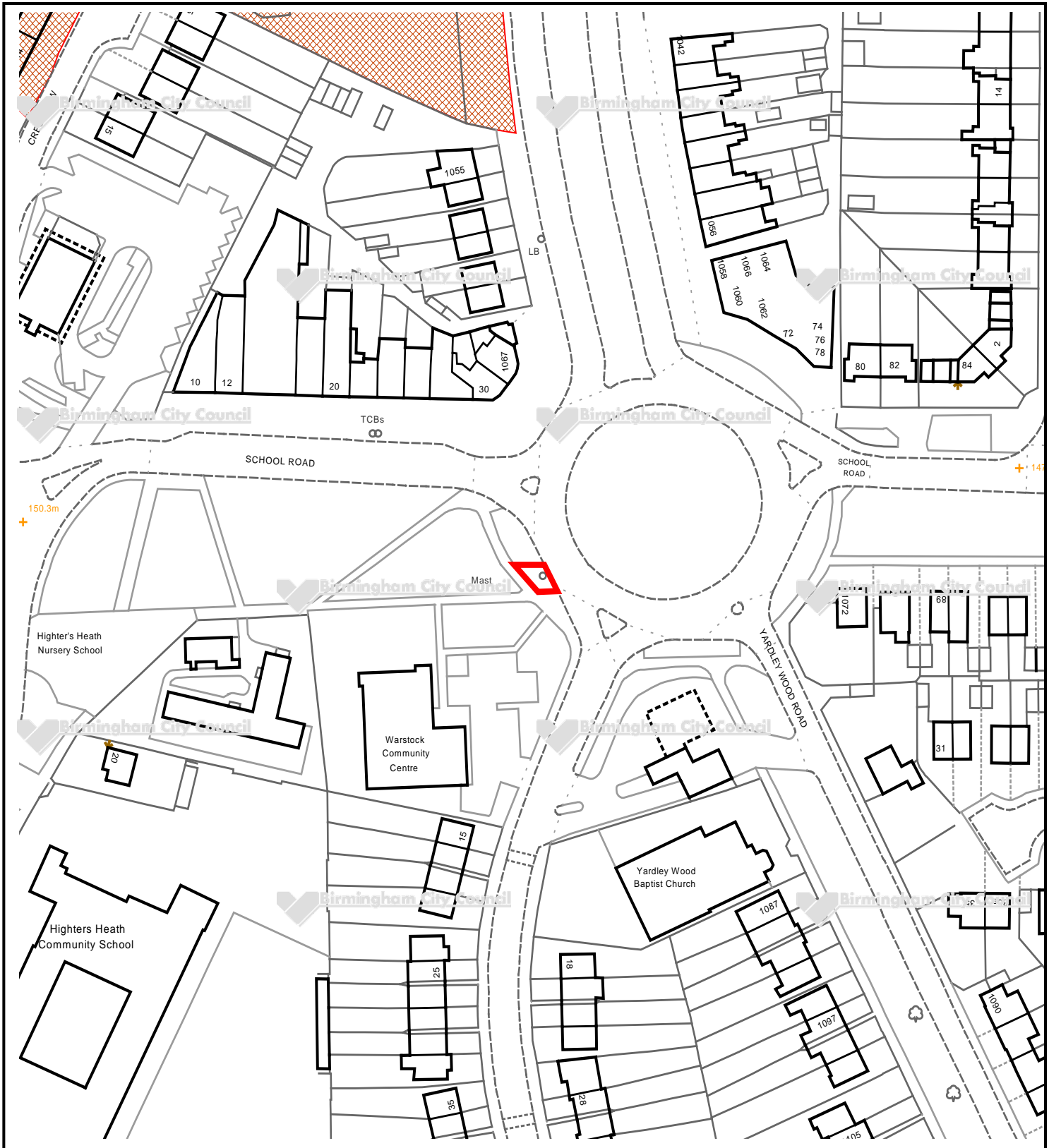
Case Officer: James Mead

Photo(s)



Photograph 1: Site of proposed mast

Location Plan



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