

8 DCCE2008/1537/F - INSTALL 5M IMITATION FLAGPOLE ROOF TOP TELECOMMUNICATIONS ANTENNAE WITH ASSOCIATED CABINET AND CABLING AT CHURCH HALL, ST. JOHNS METHODIST CHURCH, ST. OWEN STREET, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR1 2PR

**For: O2 (UK) Ltd, Babcock Networks Ltd, Park House,
12 High Street, Thornbury, Bristol, BS35 2AQ**

Date Received: 9 June 2008

Ward: Central

Grid Ref: 51283, 39821

Expiry Date: 4 August 2008

Local Member: Councillor MAF Hubbard

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 St John's Methodist Church Hall is located on the northern side of East Street and is attached to the church itself which fronts on to St Owen Street to the north. Immediately to the north west is a small private car park and south is a small public car park, the remainder of the site being largely surrounded by two and three storey buildings used as offices or occupied residentially. All of the properties immediately south west of the site fronting St Owen Street, East Street and St Ethelbert Street are listed buildings. The site also falls within the Conservation Area and an Area of Archaeological Importance.
- 1.2 Planning permission is sought for the installation of an imitation flag pole telecommunications mast attached to the northern elevation of the church hall rising 5 metres above roof top level (total height of 9 metres). The church hall is a three storey flat roofed brick building attached to the original church by a single storey flat roofed extension. At ground level a small equipment cabinet is also proposed measuring 1.5 metres in height by 1.5 metres in width.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 – Telecommunications

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007:

S2	-	Development requirements
S7	-	Natural and historic heritage
S11	-	Community facilities and services
DR1	-	Design
HBA4	-	Setting of listed buildings
HBA6	-	New development within conservation areas
CF3	-	Telecommunications

3. Planning History

3.1 None relevant.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 Defence Estates: No response received.

Internal Council Advice

4.2 Traffic Manager: No objection.

4.3 Conservation Manager: This is a particularly poor 1970's building which detracts from the conservation area. Whilst the proposal would be visible from West Street we do not believe that it would be detrimental to the character of the conservation area or the setting of the adjacent church. We therefore believe that the proposed mast is acceptable.

5. Representations

5.1 Hereford City Council: The City Council has no objections to this application.

5.2 Conservation Area Advisory Panel: No comment.

5.3 Six letters of objection have been received, the main points raised are:

1. Visually unacceptable in a conservation area.
2. Intrusion into the skyline.
3. Concerns regarding the health risk proposed by telecommunication antennae particularly for young school children who frequently use the hall for recreational purposes.
4. The proposal would devalue property resulting in compensation being claimed from householders as occurred with Swindon Council.
5. The site is in close proximity to Breast Cancer Haven, a support centre for people affected by breast cancer, Cantlupe Surgery and Gaol Street Clinic and the precautionary principle should carry weight in proposing masts near schools and hospitals.

5.4 The full text of these letters can be inspected at Central Planning Services, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 As required by Policy CF3 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 relating specifically to telecommunications installations and guidance contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 8, the applicants have provided supporting information to demonstrate both the need for the mast and that there are no other opportunities for mast or site sharing in the area. The mast is primarily required to enhance 3G (Third Generation) coverage for the Hereford City Centre area and south west of the city centre where there is presently a deficit in coverage. As a particular cell area is more heavily used, the level of coverage and particularly 3G coverage is reduced.

- Therefore, in dense urban areas, a greater number of masts are required over a smaller area to maintain the same level of coverage. This need for a mast is a material planning consideration and the supporting information demonstrates the need for additional coverage in the area.
- 6.2 It is also accepted that there are no other suitable existing masts that could be shared in the city centre area sufficient to provide the necessary coverage. Indeed, this application has been submitted following the refusal of two applications in 2007 and 2006 for other sites in the area. If there are no masts available for sharing the next most appropriate option is, as detailed in Policy CF3, the use of an existing building as proposed in this instance.
- 6.3 The proposed mast will be fixed to the side of the building and will rise a total of 5 metres above the existing roof height. However, the mast will not be readily visible in the immediate or wider locality. More specifically, the mast will not be visible from St Owen Street or St Ethelbert Street and will only be partially visible from long distance views along East Street. Furthermore, the proposed design of the mast being that of a flag pole with all antennae housed internally and equipment cabinets at ground floor will ensure the impact is further minimised. Therefore, the combination of the siting, height and design of the mast ensures the impact is minimised both visually and in terms of the conservation area. This view is supported by the Conservation Manager who raises no objection to the development. The fact the site falls within a conservation area does not preclude the installation of such apparatus and in fact, similar installations exist elsewhere within the city also within a conservation area.
- 6.4 The majority of objectors have raised concerns regarding the health risk from the electro magnetic emissions emanating from the mast. The applicants have provided a statement to demonstrate that the emissions from the mast meet the current International Commission for Non Ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) Standard for public exposure to radiofrequencies. The ICNIRP Standard is five times more restrictive than the National Radiological Protection Board standard. Therefore, based on the current information available, and notwithstanding the close proximity of existing residents, the emissions from the mast are considered acceptable.
- 6.5 Para. 98 of PPG8 states that
- “In the Government’s view, if a proposed mobile phone emissions meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for the local planning authority in processing an application to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them”.*
- 6.6 The need for an additional mast to provide and enhance 3G coverage is accepted and there are not considered to be any other more appropriate sites in the coverage area. Furthermore, it is considered that the impact of the mast within the conservation area is also acceptable in accordance with relevant Unitary Development Plan Policies.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1. A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission)).**

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. C10 (Details of external finishes).

Reason: To secure properly planned development and to ensure that the development complies with the requirements of Policy DR1 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

Informatives:

- 1. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC.**
- 2. N19 - Avoidance of doubt - Approved Plans.**

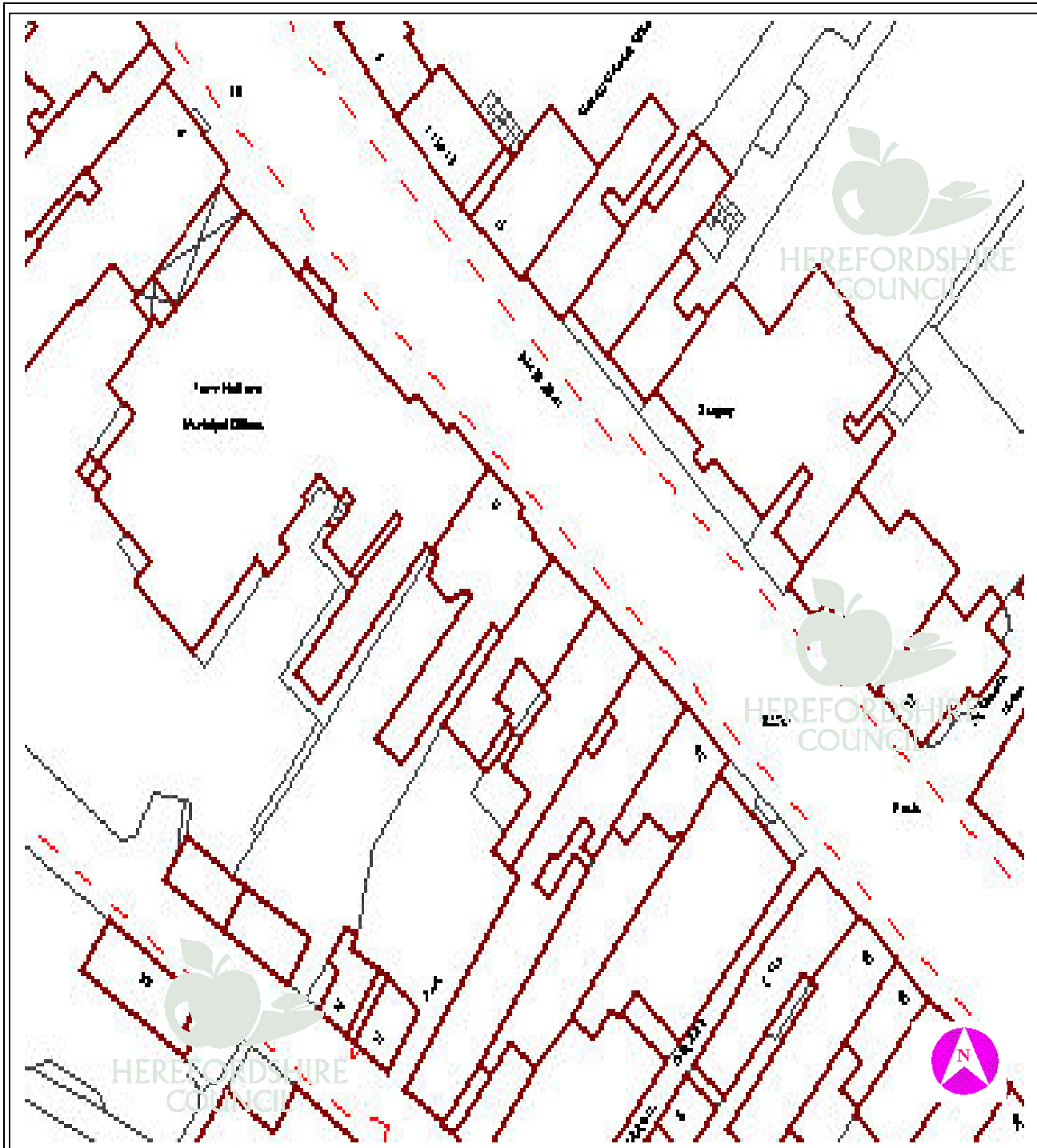
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCCE2008/1537/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Church Hall, St. Johns Methodist Church, St. Owen Street, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 2PR

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