

9 DCSE2008/2773/F - PROPOSED TELE-COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF INCREASE IN HEIGHT OF EXISTING TELE-COMMUNICATIONS TOWER FROM 15.0 METRES TO 20.0 METRES AND RELOCATION OF EXISTING ORANGE HEADFRAME AND EQUIPMENT TO NEW 20.0 METRES HEIGHT WITHIN EXISTING COMPOUND. GREAT TREWEN FARM HOUSE, WHITCHURCH, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 6ES.

For: Mr C. Searle per Mr I Coulson, Coulson Property Services, 124 Wellington Road, North Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 2LL.

Date Received: 13 November 2008 Ward: Kerne Bridge Grid Ref: 53767, 18005
Expiry Date: 8 January 2009
Local Member: Councillor JG Jarvis

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application seeks planning permission for the increase in height of the existing lattice style mobile phone mast from 15.0m to 20.0m. The rationale for the increase is given as interference from nearby trees and the consequent requirement to be above these for direct line of sight between masts. This is in order that calls can be transferred between base stations.
- 1.2 The existing mast is a standard lattice design with a single headframe. The proposed extension is the same size in section as the present upper part of the mast. The headframe, 6 antennae and single transmission dish would be relocated in the existing form, and on the same bearing, to the top of the new section.
- 1.3 The mast stands immediately adjacent another lattice tower structure, which is already at around 20.0m in height. The site is within a rural landscape to the north west of Whitchurch. The masts overlook open fields to the south and east. To the north is a small copse, the trees within which are causing the current reduction in operating performance.
- 1.4 A Design and Access Statement and ICNIRP compliance certificate accompany the application.

2. Policies

2.1 Government Guidance

PPG8 - Telecommunications

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

Policy DR1	-	Design
Policy LA2	-	Landscape character and areas least resilient to change
Policy CF3	-	Telecommunications

3. Planning History

On site:

- 3.1 SE2000/3173/T - Installation of radio equipment housing etc. Prior Approval Not Required, 18th December 2000
- 3.2 SH93/0853SZ (Cleud) Proposed Aerial - certificate issued

Adjoining:

- 3.3 SE2004/3422/F - Mast extension of 2.5m: Approved 22nd December 2004
- 3.4 SE2003/0826/F - Install one 3G panel antenna: Approved 12th May 2003
- 3.5 SE2002/0025/F - Installation of two HG3 panel antennas and cabinets etc: Approved 6th March 2002
- 3.6 SE2000/1155/T - Additional antennas at 20m, 2 x 0.6m diameter dishes and 1 x equipment cabinet: Prior approval not required.
- 3.7 SH97/1223ZZ - Installation of 6 antennas and 1 600mm diameter dish: No objection
- 3.8 SH96/1205SZ (Cleud) Proposed base station - certificate issued

4. Consultation SummaryStatutory Consultations

- 4.1 Defence Estates: No response

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager: No objection.
- 4.3 Conservation Manager (Landscapes and Biodiversity): No objection

"Approaching the site from the north, along the C1250, there is only a glimpse of the top of the masts when adjacent to the pump house, close to the C1250 crossroads. Approaching the site from the east, from Whitchurch, the top of the masts only become visible as you come over the hill and approach the C1250 crossroads. From the south, on the unclassified road leading steeply down to Ganarew, there is a glimpsed view of the upper part of the masts, on the skyline, through a gateway adjacent to Greenway Farm it is evident that the topography of the area restricts view of the masts from the wider area. Whilst the proposal would mean that a greater proportion of the upper sections of the mast would be visible from the viewpoints identified above, I consider that this would be acceptable, given there are only a limited number of viewpoints and that the existing trees provide a backdrop in addition there are quite a number of individual trees and groups of trees in the wider view of the hillside, and in this context, the prominence of the masts is reduced."

5. Representations

- 5.1 Parish Council: "The Parish Council object to this application on the grounds of continued intrusion and potential further intrusion. We suggest that the trees referred to in the application be dealt with as opposed to extending the height of the mast."

- 5.2 One letter of objection has been received from Mr MW Rudge, Hilltop, Llangrove Road, Whitchurch, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 6ES. Hilltop is 0.25km northeast of the application site. The letter raises the following points:
- Access - Service engineers continue to try and access the masts down the private driveway. This causes a nuisance.
 - Future implications - Concern is expressed that this application will not be the final proposal at the site. Objections have been lodged since 1997.
 - Alternatives - Why can't the trees be topped again, rather than extending the mast?
- 5.3 The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application explains that the increase in height is required to overcome the problems caused by the trees originally planted to screen the mast in 1993, which have subsequently grown to impede effective coverage. In response to a letter asking why the problem trees cannot be topped, the agent has explained that the trees are outside the application site and also outside the limits of the lease agreement with the landowner. Moreover, it is argued that by topping the trees by the requisite amount, the mast would become more visually prominent locally than it would under the current proposal to increase the overall height. It is also suggested that the trees will stabilise at their mature height shortly, and the increase in mast height will provide scope for this to happen without recourse to topping the trees.
- 5.4 The full text of these letters can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officer's Appraisal

- 6.1 The application proposes a 5m increase in the height of the existing mast so that it would be similar in height to the neighbouring lattice mast. The masts are visible within the landscape, although from a limited number of viewpoints as identified by the Conservation Manager, who considers the additional impact to fall within acceptable parameters. This conclusion is drawn bearing in mind the limited number of vantage points, existing backdrop and the fact that the bulk of the impact upon the landscape and visual amenity is already apparent.
- 6.2 Mindful of the operator's obligations under the Electronic Communications Code, it is considered that an objection based upon harm to the landscape and visual amenity could not be successfully sustained.
- 6.3 The agent confirms that the problem trees are outside the applicant's site and that Orange thus has no legal right or ability to force the landowner to top the trees. Apparently the landowner is adamant that the trees should not be topped.
- 6.4 The neighbour's comments regarding access are noted, but are not a material planning issue and represent a problem that would endure irrespective of whether this application is approved. In these circumstances the application is recommended for approval.

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 Notwithstanding the approved drawings, the extension hereby approved shall match in colour, form and texture those of the existing telecommunications mast.**

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development so as to comply with Policy DR1 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

INFORMATIVES:

- 1 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC**

- 2 N19 - Avoidance of doubt - Approved Plans**

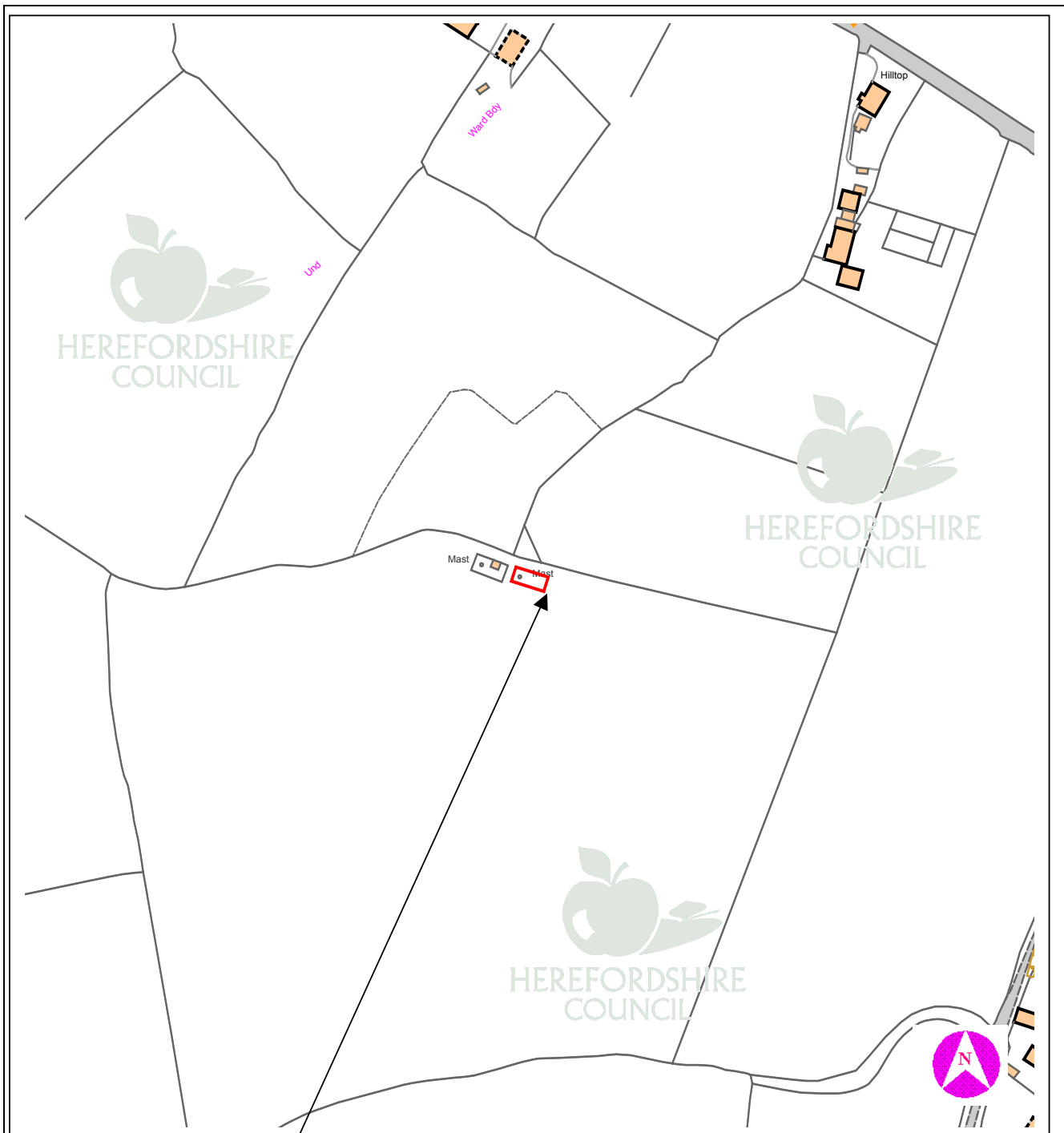
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSE2008/2773/F

SCALE : 1 : 2500

SITE ADDRESS : Great Trewen Farm House, Whitchurch, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 6ES

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