
Wouldham Burham Eccles Wouldham	572210 164207	23.12.2005	TM/05/04217/FL
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Proposal:	Telecommunications installation comprising 1 no. 12 metre timber column mast accommodating 3 no. antennas and 2 no. transmission dishes with 6 no. equipment cabinets accommodated within a 10.5m X 1.8m close boarded timber fenced compound.
Location:	Land Adjacent Pilgrims Way And Hill Road Wouldham Rochester Kent
Applicant:	Orange

1. Description:

1.1 This full application proposes the installation of a telecommunications mast. The installation is a monopole and would have an overall height of 12 metres including the antenna. The mast is a replacement for the installation on School Lane which is to be removed.

1.2 The applicants have submitted a statement in support of this application.

- *The proposed site and the design of the installation has been proposed to minimise the impact in terms of height, bulk and size, ensuring that the installation will blend exceptionally well with the immediate locale. The choice of the timber pole mast design with the minimal amount of antennas was made in order to negate the need for a much bulkier proposal and to minimise the overall impact of the installation. The height of the proposal has been reduced from that of the existing site and also as the trees to the rear of the proposal are considerably higher, the installation will be very well screened.*
- *There are no existing telecommunication sites of similar height in located within the immediate locale capable of being shared.*
- *The application has been sited and designed to predominately provide 2G and 3G coverage and capacity in the area of Wouldham and adjacent arterial routes, which currently receives coverage from the existing Orange site located off School Lane which is due to be removed in the very near future.*
- *A number of other locations have been considered but discounted for a variety of reasons. These include the existing Southern Water compound. This would require a mast of approximately 20m in height in order to maintain the level of coverage required. It is considered that this would be more visually intrusive than the site proposed. Other sites, such as land off Ferry Lane, the EDF substation in School Lane and other sites in School Lane have been considered but discounted due to either legal or technical reasons.*

- *The proposed base station will comply with ICNIRP guidelines.*

2. The Site:

- 2.1 The site is within a plot of land adjacent to the junction of Pilgrims Way and Hill Road. The site is well screened by existing mature hedging to the north, east, and west sides of the site. This screening forms a dense boundary to the site. Additional native planting is proposed to the south side of the site. The site is within the countryside and is also designated as AONB and SLA in the TMBLP.

3. Planning History:

- 3.1 None relevant.

4. Consultees:

- 4.1 PC: This is an AONB and SLA subject to policies P3/5 and P3/6 of the TMBLP. This mast, in its present form, would have a harmful effect on the area and the PC feel the height and size are far too significant to ignore and therefore object to the proposal in this form.
- 4.2 KCC (Highways): On balance acceptable given the minimal use of the access required.
- 4.3 West Kent PRoW: Public Right of Way should not be stopped up, diverted, obstructed or the surface disturbed.
- 4.4 Private Reps: 3/0X/3R/1S + Art 8 + Press Notice: Three objections received raising the following concerns:
- Development not appropriate in the AONB.
 - Undesirable on high ground on the North Downs escarpment.
 - Potential for further equipment to be installed.
 - Unsafe vehicular access.
 - Potential health implications from installation.

One letter of support received making the following points:

- Mast to replace existing unsightly mast at School Lane Farm.
- Design of mast is more appropriate given wooden pole and fact installation can be coloured to blend into the surroundings, with additional planting would soften development.

5. Determining Issues:

- 5.1 The principal considerations with this application are the principle of the development in the AONB, the impact on the surroundings and possible health implications.
- 5.2 Policy P3/5 of the TMBLP sets out policy for development in the AONB. This policy states that that priority should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area, including landscape, over other planning considerations. The mast is a replacement for an existing lattice mast to the north of School Lane at School Farm, which is also within the AONB.
- 5.3 The mast at School Farm was originally approved in 1993 and permission for upgrading facilities was granted in 2002. There is a clearly established need for a mast in this general locality and it would appear to be impossible to meet this need other than by locating a mast within the AONB.
- 5.4 The proposed mast is sited in such a position as to minimise its impact. Given the dense vegetation surrounding the site it is considered that only the antenna would be visible from the surrounding area. These would also be viewed against a backdrop of vegetation. The installation would therefore have a reduced impact compared to the existing mast and would therefore enhance the general landscape in this area. Additional planting is also proposed to the south side of the site which would further reduce the impact.
- 5.5 PPG8 in paragraph 77 advises that the telecommunications industry is encouraged to continue to develop innovative design solutions, in terms not only of the structure of the masts but also materials and colouring. A number of different design solutions are available and include masts designed to look like trees and street furniture. In this instance the mast is a slender timber pole with the antenna on top. The design of this installation is such that it would blend in to the general backdrop of the surrounding vegetation and not result in an incongruous feature when viewed in wider landscape.
- 5.6 With regard to the effects on public health from microwave radiation, it is acknowledged in PPG8 that health considerations and public concern can, in principle, be material considerations in determining applications for planning permission and prior approval. Paragraphs 98 and 99 of PPG8, amongst other things, advise that, in the Governments view, if a proposed mobile phone base station meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure it should not be necessary for an LPA to consider further the health aspects and concerns about them.
- 5.7 Furthermore all new telecommunication base stations are expected to meet the ICNIRP guidelines and all applicants are now expected to include a statement that self-certifies to the effect that the telecommunication base station when

operational will meet the guidelines. In this case the applicants have submitted such self-certification therefore there is no health issue for the LPA to consider.

5.8 The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable.

6. Recommendation:

6.1 **Grant Planning Permission** subject to the following conditions:

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 If at any time the mast is no longer required for telecommunications purposes it shall be removed as soon as is reasonably practical and the land restored to its former condition.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

3 Within one month of the completion of this mast the existing installation at School Farm shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition.*

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

4 The new antennas shall be coloured olive brown as indicated on drawing no. KNT0462/10A dated 23 December 2005 within one month of their installation and shall be retained as such all times thereafter.*

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the locality.

5 The scheme of landscaping and boundary treatment shown on the approved plans shall be carried out in the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the earlier. Any trees or plants which within 10 years of planting are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: Pursuant to Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality.

Contact: Robin Gilbert