

## List No. 2

<b>Chorlton Ward</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>Date of Appln</b>	<b>Committee Date</b>
	084620/FO/2007/S1	28th Sep 2007	22nd Nov 2007

**Proposal** Installation of 6 antennas, and three dishes on existing mast and a new equipment cabin.

**Location** BT Telephone Exchange, Albany Road, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 1BN

**Applicant** National Grid Wireless, Altrincham Business Park, George Richards Way, Altrincham Way, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 5GL

**Agent** Higham And Co 500 Styal Road, Manchester, M22 5HQ

### Description

This application relates to the roof of the existing BT telephone exchange which is located at the northern end of Albany Road Chorlton. The BT exchange is a large three storey, flat roofed building with an associated surface level car park which immediately adjoins to the north. In terms of its immediate surroundings, the site is bordered by large office buildings and a petrol filling station to the south and west, Unicorn grocery store to the north and residential dwellings to the east along Buckingham Road but separated by a former railway cutting which forms part of Metrolink proposals.

The proposal relates to the installation of 6 antennas, 3 small transmission satellite dishes and 1 associated equipment cabin on the rooftop of the telephone exchange building. This equipment is proposed to be installed on the existing headframes which already accommodates various other large items of telecommunication equipment including a 7.5 metre high stub mast. It is intended that the 6 antennas will be located on this mast together with the 3 transmission satellite dishes (2 x 300mm and 1 x 600mm). The associated equipment cabin will be located on existing grillage also on the roof.

The additional equipment proposed as part of this application is required to provide a wireless broadband service to the local area. Essentially this entails the provision of a high capacity communication link which can handle large volumes of data. The development of such a network will contribute to the Government's core objective to make the UK the best place in the world to do electronic business.

### Consultations

Local Residents - 3 letters of objection have been received, with one letter including a petition with 17 signatures. These representations are summarised below:

- 1) The views from Buckingham Road are already adversely affected by the proliferation of ugly contraptions and the installation of more equipment would make the situation worse.
- 2) The structures will have an impact on property value.
- 3) The structures have an adverse visual impact on the character of the area.

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4) Unnecessary risks are taken with health. The health risks associated with such structures are debatable and a precautionary approach should be taken.

Ward Councillors - Councillor Sheila Newman has lodged the following objection:

The existing mast is unsightly enough without these extra antennas, dishes and equipment. Local residents in nearby Albany Road, Keppel Road, Brantingham Road and Buckingham Road will suffer visual disamenity and such a structure will have a negative impact on their quality of life.

Councillor Paul Ankers is concerned about the potential radiation of such a scheme.

Tony Lloyd MP - forwarded correspondence from one of his constituents and requested that consideration be given to the points raised.

Environmental Health - No adverse comment and no objection to the principle of the proposal.

## **Issues**

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (UDP) for the City of Manchester. There are no site specific policies relating to the application site. However, the following city wide policies are relevant to the proposal.

Policy DC17.1, "Telecommunications", states that applications for telecommunications will normally be approved if the Council can be satisfied that the development has been sited and designed to minimise its impact on residential amenity and in environmentally sensitive areas. The City Council will expect the potential of existing buildings and masts to be fully explored before agreeing to additional separate development.

Policy H2.2 states that the Council will not allow development that will have an unacceptable impact on residential areas. The matters that the Council will consider include the scale and appearance of the development and its impact in terms of noise, vibration, traffic generation, road safety and air pollution.

In addition to the above, central government provide national planning guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and more recently on some planning issues, Planning Policy Statements (PPSs).

PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' underpins the planning system and sets out the overarching policies on the delivery of sustainable development. Emphasis is placed on the need for good design to ensure attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places.

PPG8 'Telecommunications' sets out the Government's guidance on planning for telecommunication development. This includes guidance on radio masts, towers, antennas of all kinds, radio equipment housing, public call boxes, cabinets, poles and overhead wires. The aim of telecommunication policy is to ensure that people have choice for their telecommunication service, a wide range of services and equitable access to the latest technologies.

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Principle - It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and would pose no significant or material harm to the amenity of adjoining residents or significantly exacerbate any negative impact on the character of the area. The provision of broadband equipment is a government objective championed by the its 'Broadband Britain' policy. Its aim is to widen accessibility to wireless broadband services to increase the benefits of modern communications.

The rooftop of the telephone exchange already accommodates several large structures and equipment associated with telecommunications. It is considered that the proposed equipment is minimal compared to the existing equipment and therefore there will be little material difference in terms of visual impact. The site is a well established telecommunication site and this proposal will site equipment on the existing headframes and the existing mast and will form an ancillary component on the rooftop of the exchange. The small scale equipment cabin will also be located immediately adjacent to much larger existing radio equipment housing and will be screened in views from the residential area to the east.

In addition to the above, the principle of the proposal is considered satisfactory as the scheme utilises an existing site and therefore prevents the use of another area for the siting of telecommunication site. The sharing of sites accords with government guidance and most notably, paragraph 68 of PPG8. This states:

In order to limit visual intrusion, the Government attaches considerable importance to keeping the number of radio and telecommunication masts and of the sites for such installations to the minimum, consistent with the efficient operation of the network. The sharing of masts and sites is strongly encouraged where that represents the optimum environmental solution in a particular case.

Consultation - Prior consultation was carried out on the specific proposals for the site. The assessment for this and the consultation strategy was based upon the best practice approach adopted by mobile phone operators.

Visual Amenity - Although it is acknowledged that the existing equipment is unattractive, it is considered that the proposed equipment to be installed upon the existing apparatus is minor in nature and there will be no significant or material difference on visual amenity. The selected design minimises visual impact by utilising existing apparatus already in situ on the building. This is considered preferable in environmental terms to alternative design solutions to meet the operator's technical requirements. For example, an additional mast structure or antennas located elsewhere, or on a rooftop of a building which would require additional support apparatus. The benefit of siting the proposed antennas and dishes on the existing headframes is that the amount of additional apparatus required is minimised.

In order to mitigate against the existing and proposed visual impact of the equipment, the applicant has investigated the use of Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) shrouding to screen all the equipment. However, it is considered inappropriate in the context of the current proposal and site. Such screening would effectively be like doubling the height of the existing telephone exchange building. It is therefore considered that the size of the GRP structure required to screen all the equipment would appear as an incongruous feature, not in keeping with the design of the existing building. The mass and scale of such a structure would have a more significant visual impact on the character of the

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area than is currently the case. Moreover, the building also accommodates other stub masts that do not relate to these proposals and as such would remain outside of any GRP screening.

Health and Safety - The application has been accompanied by an ICNIRP certificate (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection). This declares that the proposed equipment and installation conforms with public exposure guidelines and is accepted by the World Health Organisation as an appropriate safeguard.

The proposed equipment will transmit radio waves at extremely low power levels and it is confirmed that these power levels take into account both existing and proposed equipment at the site and will conform to ICNIRP guidelines in all areas accessible by the public.

Paragraph 98 of PPG8 states that it is the government's firm view that the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. It goes on to say that if installations meet ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure, it should not be necessary for the Local Planning Authority to consider further health aspects and concerns about them when determining an application. As the application in this instance was accompanied by a certificate as to ICNIRP compliance, this is satisfactory in terms of any radiation or health concerns.

With regard to this proposal, the Council places more weight on government advice that the provided the proposal meets ICNIRP guidelines that is conclusive as to safety. In relation to this proposal, it is not considered that the generalised concern expressed by all objectors amounts to any exceptional circumstances as to cause the Council to depart from guidance and therefore health concerns should not be considered further.

Alternative Locations - A number of alternative locations were investigated as alternative locations for the siting of the proposed equipment. The exercise established that the only telecommunications site suitable and available for use is the current application site. Sites investigated included, the rooftop of Graeme House, Chorlton Square, rooftop of 102 Manchester Road, rooftop of Chorlton House, Manchester Road and the existing Vodafone mast at garage premises on Albany Road. All these sites were discounted due to not being available for use, leasing arrangements or a lack of structural capacity to accommodate additional apparatus and antennas. The subject site was selected as the only real choice that accords with policy and guidance. Moreover, as the proposal does not entail a new mast or a new site for electronic communications, it conforms to the advice on sharing existing structures.

House Prices - Concerns have been expressed by some residents that the price of their property could be affected by the installation of more telecommunication equipment. It should be noted however that house value is not a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. This point is underlined within Paragraph 29 of PPS1. This states:

'The planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against the activities of another, although private interests may coincide with the public interest in some cases'.

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This point is reaffirmed within Paragraph 56 of PPG8. This states:

'Although in a particular case considerations of public interest may serve to protect private interests, the material question is not whether a particular development would cause financial or other loss to owners and occupiers of the neighbouring property, but whether the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the locality generally, and on amenities that ought, in the public interest, to be protected'.

In light of the above, the impact of the development on house prices in the local area should not be a consideration in the determination of this planning application.

**Human Rights Act 1998 considerations** – This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have the right to a fair hearing and to this end the Committee must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Unitary Development Plan, the Head of Planning has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. He believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the approval of the application is proportionate to the wider benefits of approval and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and country Planning Acts.

## **Recommendation APPROVE**

It is recommended that in light of policies DC17.1 and H2.2 of the Unitary Development Plan, the application should be approved. The proposed telecommunication equipment will be sited on an rooftop which already accommodates much larger equipment and will therefore share the same site. It is considered that this will minimise the impact of such installations on the wider area and therefore comply with the provisions of policy DC17.1. In addition, the relatively minor nature and scale of the equipment to be installed is not considered to have any material impact when compared to the existing equipment already present on the rooftop. As such, the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the nearby residential area and would therefore meet the requirements of policy H2.2. The application was accompanied by an ICNIRP certificate and there are no exceptional circumstances which would indicate a departure from PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development and PPG8 'Telecommunications'.

## **Conditions and/or Reasons**

1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

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

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and documents received by the Council as Local Planning Authority on 28th September 2007

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to Policy H2.2 of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan.

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

The documents referred to in the course of this report are either contained in the file(s) relating to application ref: 084620/FO/2007/S1 held by planning or are City Council planning policies, the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, national planning guidance documents, or relevant decisions on other applications or appeals, copies of which are held by the Planning Division.

## **The following residents, businesses and other third parties in the area were consulted/notified on the application:**

### Environmental Health

108 Manchester Road, Manchester, M21 9TX

101 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

103 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

105 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

107 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

109 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

111 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

113 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

115 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

117 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

119 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

121 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

123 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

125 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

127 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

129 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

99 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

3 Buckfast Close, Manchester, M21 0RY

5 Buckfast Close, Manchester, M21 0RY

7 Buckfast Close, Manchester, M21 0RY

2 Buckfast Close, Manchester, M21 0RY

4 Buckfast Close, Manchester, M21 0RY

6 Buckfast Close, Manchester, M21 0RY

Chorlton Cars, 330 Brantingham Road, Manchester, M21 0BJ

British Telecom, Telephone Splicing Depot, Albany Road, Manchester, M21 0BN

British Telecom, Telephone Exchange, Albany Road, Manchester, M21 0BN

Cosgrove Hall Films Ltd, 8 Albany Road, Manchester, M21 0AW

77-79, Albany Road, Manchester, M21 0BN

Unicorn Grocery, 89 Albany Road, Manchester, M21 0BN

David Arran, Albany Service Station, Brantingham Road, Manchester, M21 0BG

Manchester Social Services, 102 Manchester Road, Manchester, M21 9SZ

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76 Manchester Road, Manchester, M21 9PQ

78 Manchester Road, Manchester, M21 9PQ

Princess Of Hearts Indian Restaurant, 72 Manchester Road, Manchester, M21 9PQ

Chorlton Service Station, 84 Manchester Road, Manchester, M21 9PT

72a, Manchester Road, Manchester, M21 9PQ

**Representations were received from the following third parties:**

Environmental Health

Ward Councillors

107 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

117 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

121 Buckingham Road, Manchester, M21 0RG

Cosgrove Hall Films Ltd, 8 Albany Road, Manchester, M21 0AW

Tim Swinton, 121 Buckingham Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy

**Relevant Contact Officer :** Steven McCoombe  
**Telephone number :** 0161 234 4607  
**Email :** s.mccoombe@manchester.gov.uk