

Planning Reference No:	11/0752N
Application Address:	Land at Junction of Brook Street and Edleston Road, Crewe
Proposal:	17.5 metre high joint operator street furniture type telecommunications tower, 1 No equipment cabinet, 1 No metre cabinet and all ancillary development
Applicant:	O2 and Vodafone C/O WFS Telecom
Application Type:	Full planning
Ward:	Crewe
Earliest Determination Date:	27 th April 2011
Expiry Dated:	15th April 2011
Date Report Prepared:	12 th April 2011
Constraints:	None

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

MAIN ISSUES:

The key issues that Members should consider in determining this application are:

- a. Principle of development
- b. Design, Siting, and External Appearance
- c. Alternative Sites
- d. Health and Safety Considerations and Neighbouring Amenity
- e. Highway Safety

REASON FOR REFERRAL

Councillor Dorothy Fleud has called the application into Planning Committee for determination for the following reason:

‘That the mast would over dominate the surrounding residential properties in the area.’

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

This application relates to an area of land at the junction of Edleston Road and Brook Street, Crewe. The proposal would be sited upon the pavement, parallel with its rear edge. Residential properties lie to the east south and west of the site.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a 17.5 metre high telecommunications tower and an equipment and metre cabinet.

The proposal would allow for a sharable O2/Vodafone 3G solution to be achieved through the use of a slim line street furniture type tower incorporating 6No. antennas within a GRP shroud.

RELEVANT HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history for this site.

POLICIES

Relevant National Planning Legislation

PPG8: Telecommunications

Local Plan Policy

BE. 1 Amenity

BE. 2 Design Standards

BE. 3 Access and Parking

NE. 18 Telecommunications Development

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways:

No response was received at the time of report preparation however; Members will be informed of any response received via an update.

Environmental Health:

No response was received at the time of report preparation however; Members will be informed of any response received via an update.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

No other representations were received at the time of report preparation.

APPLICANTS SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- ICNIRP Declaration
- Site specific supplementary information
- General Background information on Radio Network Development for Planning Applications
- Design and access statement
- Discounted site information. Alternative sites have been discounted for the following reasons: presence of mature trees, would not address coverage deficit, site owner hindrance, limited space for ground structures, impact upon aesthetics, overlooked by larger number of residential properties, no benefit of significant backdrop, nature of rooftop could not accommodate development, limited pavement widths.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Development is acceptable within the settlement zone line of towns provided that it is in keeping with the town's scale and character and does not conflict with other relevant development plan policies.

Design, Siting, and External Appearance

The proposed installation would measure an overall height of 17.5 metres incorporating 6No. 1.3 metre long antennas within a 3.8 metre shroud and would have a galvanized grey finish. The accompanying equipment and metre cabinets would measure 1840 x 440 x 1403mm and 375 x 170 x 872 respectively and have a fir green finish.

The site is located upon a pavement within a mixed-use locale. Supporting information states that the proposal would benefit from a context and backdrop of existing lighting columns, advertisement boards, mature vegetation, and other urban development, which would all aid in minimising any potential impact. Whilst such statement is acknowledged, there is significant concern with regard to the visual appearance of the proposal.

The proposal would significantly protrude above the height of such existing features; for example the heights of the existing lighting columns are approximately 5-6 metres. Whilst it is accepted that street furniture of this type may be a now commonplace infrastructure feature throughout urban/suburban environments, the masts height is considered visually unacceptable. The mast would appear unduly prominent and incongruous by virtue of its significant height and would materially harm the character and appearance of the area. It would appear visually obtrusive and would adversely affect the street scene contrary to Policy NE.18 and BE2 of the Local Plan.

It has been noted within supporting information that the proposed tower height is a direct operational requirement to allow for effective coverage to be achieved taking into account the surrounding clutter, such as trees and undulating topography. However, at the time of report preparation no coverage plots had been submitted to the Local Authority and as such it could not be established that a smaller, more appropriate mast, could not provide adequate coverage for the area.

It is noted that there is no objection to the design, siting, and external appearance of the proposed equipment and metre cabinets.

Alternative Sites

Government guidance aims to facilitate new telecommunications development, and consideration needs to be given as to whether all suitable alternative locations have been explored.

Alternative sites have been explored as part of this development and a summary of why such have been discounted has been provided in the supporting information section of this report.

On the basis of the information submitted, it is accepted that the operator has complied with guidance and explored suitable alternative sites.

Health and Safety Considerations and Neighbouring Amenity

With regard to any perceived health risks, the advice offered by the Government's advisors, the National Radiological Protection Board, is that "the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near base stations". It is the Government's view that if a proposed development meets the ICNIRP guidelines as recommended by the Stewart Report, it should not be necessary for a planning authority to consider health effects further.

It is confirmed that the installation complies with the requirements of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) for public exposure and that the Certificate produced by the operator takes into account the effect of the emissions from mobile phone network operators on the site. It is not considered therefore, that health considerations would form the basis of a substantial reason for refusal.

Highway Safety

The proposed development would be sited on the pavement and would reduce its width to 1.7 metres in front of the mast and equipment cabinet and 1.9 metres in front of the metre cabinet. Whilst this is below the 2 metres recommended in Manual for Streets, the Governments Inclusive Mobility guide accepts 1.5 metres as wide enough for a wheelchair and pedestrian to pass.

The guide advises that the length of the restricted width should be no more than six metres and the proposed installations would affect 4.5 metres.

Given that an inspector has previously accepted reduced pavements widths of up to 1.5 metres (DCS Number 100-070-208) it is not considered that in this instance pedestrians would be unduly inconvenienced and the development would not raise any highway safety implications.

CONCLUSIONS

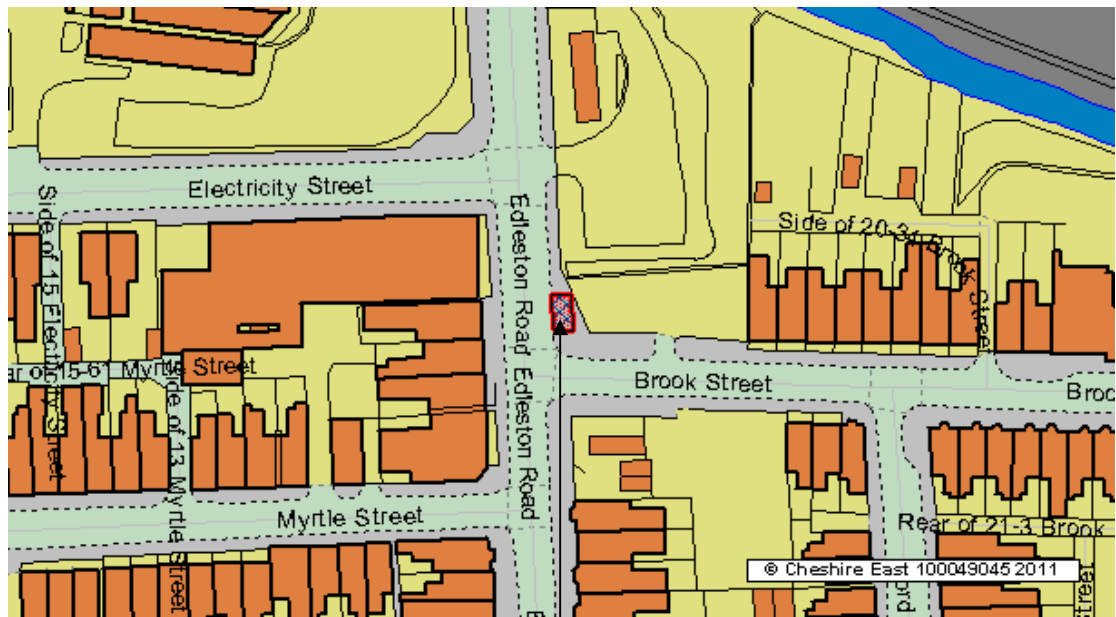
The height and siting of the proposed column would result in a demonstrable harm to the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The column by virtue of its significant height would appear highly incongruous and visually obtrusive to the detriment of the surrounding street scene contrary to policies BE.2 and NE.18 of the Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse for the following reason:

The proposed development by reasoning of its height, siting and design would create an alien and intrusive feature. This is a prominent location within the residential area and this proposal would represent a visually incongruous insertion that would harm the character and appearance of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies NE.18 (Telecommunications

Development), and BE.2 (Design Standards) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.



The Site