

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Planning Committee of East Woodhay Parish Council continues to strongly object to this application and any application for a mast in this location of any height.

We are dismayed by the continuing lack of attention to detail displayed by the applicant, as evidenced by the applicant repeating the same mistakes in the narrative for this application as were made in the previous application (which was refused). For example, reference is still made to “adjacent street lights” at the site when there are absolutely none! This leads us to doubt how ‘robust’ the applicant’s search for other sites has really been.

Our grounds for objection continue to be as follows:

1. A very comprehensive report was produced by the Planning Officer in refusing the previous application for an 18m mast (21/01417/TENO). After taking all matters into consideration, the Planning Officer concluded that this site was not appropriate for such an installation. The reasons given were: *“The site is located within a visually prominent location, on the edge of a rural settlement location within the North Wessex Down Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and by virtue of the proposal’s scale, height and appearance, the proposed development would not positively contribute to the street scene, to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area and the rural characteristics of the area.”* With only the height of the mast having been slightly reduced, these reasons for refusal remain as valid now as they were then.
2. Woolton Hill is a rural village located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The erection of a phone mast in the middle of the village would completely destroy the visual amenity which this location affords the local community – whether that mast be 18m (the previous application) or 15m (the current application). This visual amenity is highly protected and is referenced in the Neighbourhood Plan (Section 14 consultation complete): this application is therefore another flagrant attempt to treat this amenity and protection as if they do not exist.
3. The NPPF (July 2018) provides at paragraph 113 that where new sites are required for this type of equipment they should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate. The proposed site is exposed on all sides apart from some small trees on the north side. It is also very small, measuring approximately 8 metres by 5 metres, and is situated on the corner of a junction of three roads. At best, it is therefore a massive understatement for the applicant to suggest that although *“there will be an intensification of the amount of equipment (additional monopole and associated cabinets in the area) it is felt that such a minor increase would not detract from the area in which the proposal sits”*. It is inconceivable that a 15 metre phone mast and associated cabinets would have anything other than a deleterious impact on the area in which the proposed mast would stand. (See photos of the site below.)
4. Contrary to the applicant’s assertion that the *“site benefits from the screening from the trees adjacent”*, those trees would provide little, if any, screening at all. The mast would stand in front of them and, as the applicant accepts, they are in any event considerably shorter than the height of the proposed mast.

5. The applicant continues to assert that their selection process was *“influenced by the numerous vertical elements of street furniture distributed around the vicinity of the site including street lighting columns.”* We have no faith in this selection process as the applicant continues to make this statement – when in reality there are NO *“vertical elements”* or *“street lighting columns”* in that area of the village. Indeed NO street lighting columns are visible from the site.
6. Furthermore, the applicant’s own photographs show clearly that there is no surrounding street furniture, lamp posts etc. A 15 metre pole of unspecified colour will be visually obtrusive. Indeed, the paragraph where colour is said to be specified, does not specify the colour proposed for this site. In the unfortunate event that this installation might be permitted, due consideration should be given as to how best to camouflage it into the surrounding ‘big sky’ picture. (See photos of the site below.)
7. To further illustrate the point, please also see below some photographs of a similar monopole which has recently been constructed in Newbury, a much more urban location but still an undisguised blot on the landscape – which this would clearly be.
8. Economic and social benefits. The Applicant states: *“There would be clear economic and social benefits associated with allowing the telecommunications development in accordance with paragraph 114 of the Framework”*. This refers to another appeal in another place. There is no attempt in this case to justify or explain what these benefits might be nor for whom. **It should be remembered that 5G signal propagation is very limited and would not cover the whole population of Woolton Hill even if a demonstrable need had been shown.**
9. Section 5 Technical justification: *“The National Planning Policy Framework clearly states that authorities should NOT question the need for the service, nor seek to prevent competition between operators.”* The key part of this extract from the applicant’s submission is: *“nor seek to prevent competition between operators”*.

Using the applicant’s own terminology, they identify this location as the only viable place to site a mast; and they also state that site sharing is technically impossible. It follows from this that installing a mast at the proposed site would thereby *“prevent competition between operators”*, in clear breach of the provisions of the NPPF.

Furthermore, in this section, the applicant goes on to say: *“The site is required to provide new 5G coverage for CK Hutchison Networks (UK) Ltd in order to improve coverage in the area of Hampshire.”* This pole will only serve a part of the low density habitation of Woolton Hill, which has no significant business users nor any major road passing within range of the transmitter and thus will be of no benefit to any passing traffic.

It therefore cannot be claimed that it is necessary to improve the coverage in this area of Hampshire, when its footprint covers so few people.

10. The previous application for an 18 metre mast was refused on the grounds of visual destruction of the village environment. Reducing a pole height from 18 to 15 metres does not address that point. It is still an ugly construct.

For these reasons, and others highlighted or repeated by members of our community, we would ask that this application be refused.

11. In the dire circumstance of this application being granted, an important consideration (and condition) should be given (and imposed) as to how best to camouflage the mast into the surrounding 'big sky' picture (see artist's impression below, showing how obtrusive a large white (in this example) monopole would be in this location).

Please advise the Parish Clerk should the matter be referred to the Development Control Committee as the Parish Council may wish to appoint a Councillor to attend.

Yours faithfully,

Planning Committee,
East Woodhay Parish Council.

(See photographs below)

Photographs showing installation of similar monopole and supporting cabinets in an urban location – Newbury - where it is still a ‘blot on the landscape’. It will be even more obtrusive in this rural location and should be refused.



Photographs showing the rural nature of the existing site – please note there is no street lighting in the vicinity and the trees are not of sufficient height to offer any concealment of the monopole.



Artist's Impression of what a 15m monopole might look like in this location:

