

KEY INFORMATION

Ward Strathmartine

Proposal

Installation of a 12.5m high telecommunications mast and 2 No. equipment cabinets

Address

Land Adjacent to Asda
Derwent Avenue
Dundee

Applicant

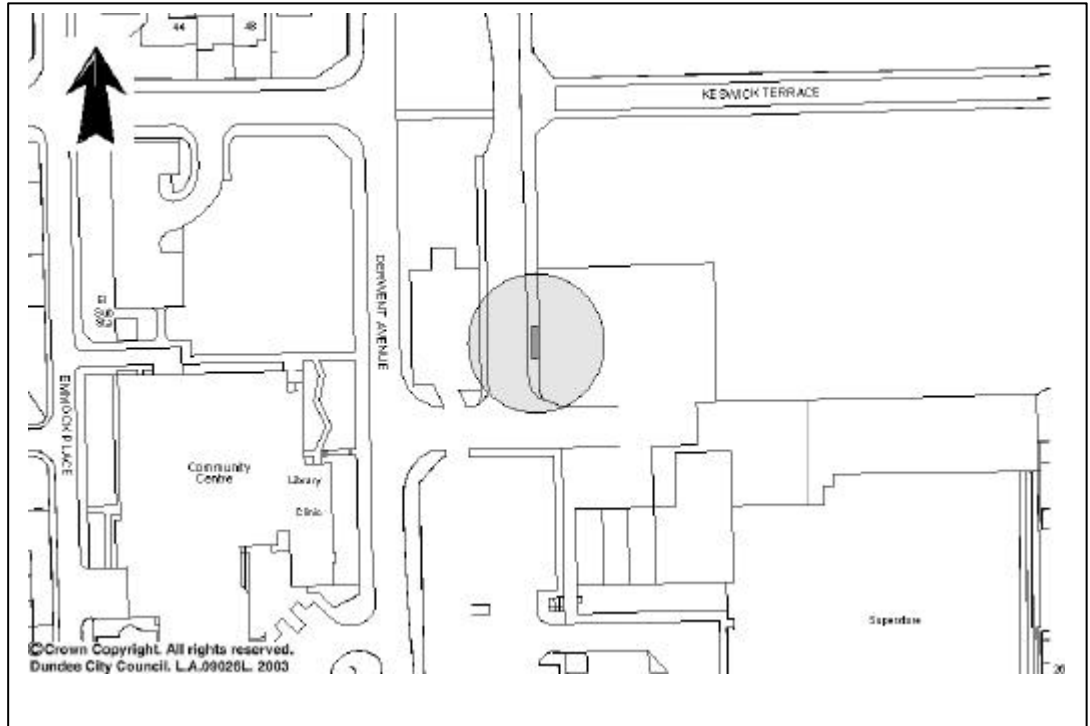
O2 (UK) Ltd
c/o Stappard Howes
122 Dundyvan Road
Coatbridge
ML5 1DE

Agent

Stappard Howes
122 Dundyvan Road
Coatbridge
ML5 1DE

Registered 19 August
2005

Case Officer S Cooper



Proposal for Mobile Phone Mast in Derwent Avenue

The installation of a telecommunications mast and equipment cabinets is **RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS**. Report by Director of Planning and Transportation

RECOMMENDATION

It is considered that the proposed development accords with the provisions of Policies 1 and 78 of the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005 and complies with National Policy. Although objections have been received it is considered that they do not carry sufficient weight such as to justify the refusal of the application. Therefore the application is recommended for **APPROVAL**.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- Planning permission is sought by O2(UK) Ltd for the erection of a 12.5m high telecommunications monopole and 2no. equipment cabinets on land adjacent to Asda, Derwent Avenue, Dundee.
- Policies 1 and 78 of the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005 are of relevance as well as the Government guidance and advice contained in NPPG19 and PAN62.
- Two letters of objection and a petition containing 31 signatures have been received against the application. The main concern of the objectors relates to health issues.
- The proposed development has an operational justification and several alternatives were considered but had to be discounted as they were no better in terms of visual amenity. It is considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005 and complies with National Policy. It is considered that there are no material considerations that would justify the refusal of the application.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought by O2 (UK) Ltd for the erection of a 12.5 metres high telecommunications monopole and 2 no. equipment cabinets on land adjacent to the Asda store at Derwent Avenue, Dundee. The proposed monopole would be located on a footpath to the north of an existing bus shelter.

The proposed monopole would be some 12.5 metres in height and would have three antennas that would be contained within a shroud. The proposed equipment cabinets would be 1.4 metres in height.

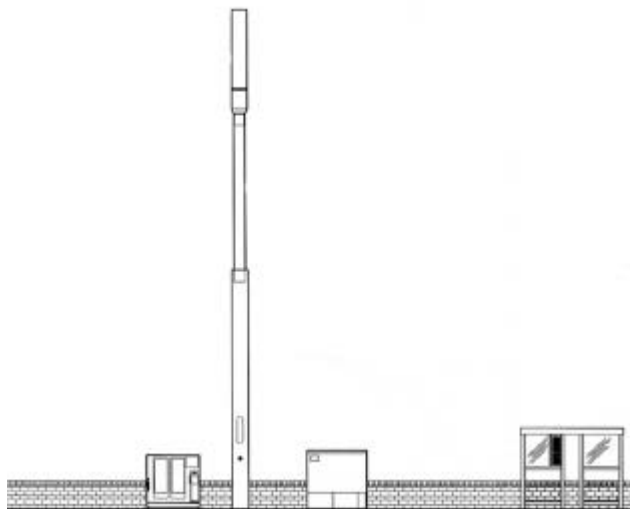
As part of their strategy for providing 3G coverage throughout the City the applicant has worked with the Council in selecting suitable sites for the proposed telecommunications development and has completed pre-application consultations prior to the submission of this application. The applicant has submitted a supporting statement with coverage maps to justify the proposal which is to provide coverage to the Downfield and Kirkton areas of the City.

The applicant has considered some 11 other sites as alternatives to this proposal. The applicant comments on these sites as follows;

- 1 Sharing existing Hutchison 3G mast at Strathmartine Road, to the north west of the application site. This would require complete redevelopment of the mast and an extension of the existing compound to accommodate the additional O2 equipment. This would be unacceptable in visual amenity terms in this predominantly residential area.
- 2 Sharing Tayside Police Mast at Balgowan Avenue. Like the Hutchison 3G option above, this would require the complete redevelopment of the mast to accommodate the additional equipment. Furthermore, the area in which the mast is located is relatively low lying and therefore a taller mast would be required to provide coverage to the target area. This option was discounted due to the adverse visual impact

it would have on the surrounding area.

- 3 Downfield South Church. This



option was progressed by the applicant. O2 proposed to install antennas behind replacement louvers within the spire of the Church. Furthermore, the proposed would not have required planning permission. However, following significant public opposition the Church Board withdrew from the proposal with the result that it can no longer progress.



- 4 Orange PCS/T-Mobile rooftop installations at Baberton Court. This option was discounted as it would be located to the west of the search area and would not provide the required 3G coverage to the target area.
- 5 New streetworks mast at Derwent Avenue. This option was discounted as underground

services were discovered during a trial dig which would mean that it could not be implemented, even if planning permission was to be granted.

- 6 St. Lukes Church, Baldovan Road. This option is on a low lying piece of land and accordingly was discounted as it would not provide the required coverage.

7 New mast at Americanmuir Rd/MacAlpine Rd. Due to the topography of the land and the location of the site with regard to the target area, this option would not provide the target area with the coverage required. Furthermore the location would be very close to residential properties. The option was therefore discounted for the above reasons.

- 8 Kirkton Neighbourhood Centre, Derwent Avenue. The building is currently used as a library and community centre. The applicant has experienced strong opposition to proposals within the Downfield area. Furthermore, due to the height of the building the equipment would have to be pole mounted at least 5 metres above the rooftop to provide the required coverage. The applicant considers that this would be more visually intrusive than the proposed mast and therefore this option was discounted.

- 9 St. Columbus Church, Derwent Avenue. The applicant states that an appropriate scheme could not be identified without having a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the building. This option was therefore discounted on visual amenity grounds.

- 10 Land south of Keswick Terrace. During pre-application discussions with the Council the applicant was informed that the area was earmarked for

redevelopment and therefore this option was discounted.

- 11 Floodlight structure at Scottish Water Treatment Works, Clatto Gardens. Complete redevelopment of the structure would be required. Furthermore the site is located at the edge of the search area and would not provide adequate coverage. Therefore this option was discounted by the applicant.

The applicant considers that the proposed streetworks type monopole is the most acceptable solution in visual amenity terms.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed monopole and associated equipment cabinets would be located on a footpath to the north west of the existing Asda superstore at Derwent Avenue. The application site is located to the north of an existing bus stop and is located to the east of a car parking area. A 1 metre high wall is located at the eastern edge of the footpath. There are existing streetlighting columns some 8 metres in height in the streetscene. The land to the east of the application site is presently grassed and is earmarked for a village green and football pitch for use by local residents. The closest residential properties are located some 70 metres north west of the application site.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Dundee Local Plan Review 2005

The following policies are of relevance:

Policy 78 Location of Telecommunications Equipment.

In general, operators are encouraged where practicable to mast share. Where mast sharing is not practicable, alternative solutions in terms of location and design, will be assessed with the objective of minimising the environmental impact on the City.

Policy 1 Vibrant and Sustainable Communities.

New development should seek to minimise any affect on the environmental quality enjoyed by local residents.

Scottish Planning Policies, Planning Advice Notes and Circulars

The following are of relevance:

National Planning Policy Guideline 19 Radio Telecommunications

NPPG 19 emphasises the importance of establishing good communication and trust between operators and planning authorities and encourages pre-application discussions to determine appropriate siting and design approaches. It acknowledges the benefits of modern telecommunications and seeks to encourage such development as being essential to a modern economy and contributing to sustainable objectives. It states that health issues are covered by other legislation. It gives advice on the siting and design of masts, referring to PAN 62.

Planning Advice Note 62 Radio Telecommunications.

PAN 62 provides best practice advice on the process of site selection and design and illustrates how the equipment can be sensitively installed.

Non Statutory Statements of Council Policy

The Council's Non Statutory Planning Policies in Relation to Telecommunications and Other Apparatus is of relevance. Policy 1 is of particular relevance and is considered in respect of Policy 78 below

LOCAL AGENDA 21

Key Theme 7 requires access to facilities, services, goods and people is not achieved at the expense of the environment and are accessible to all. It is considered that the proposed development meets with the aims of Key Theme 7.

SITE HISTORY

There is no site planning history relevant to this application.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The applicant's agent carried out pre-application consultations in the local area and the application was the

subject of statutory Neighbour Notification.

Two letters of objection and a petition have been received. The main grounds of objection relate to health issues. The other grounds raised by the objectors are that the proposed monopole may prejudice any potential future uses of the land to the east of the application site; that there is no need for the telecommunications monopole in the area; and that it would affect the value of houses in the area.

Copies of the letters and the petition are available for inspection in the Members' Lounges. It is intended to comment on the issues raised in the objections in the "Observations" section of this report

CONSULTATIONS

No comments on the proposed development were received from any Statutory Consultees.

OBSERVATIONS

In accordance with the provisions of Section 25 of the Act the Committee is required to consider

- a whether the proposals are consistent with the provisions of the development plan; and if not
- b whether an exception to the provisions of the development plan is justified by other material considerations

The Development Plan

The provisions of the development plan relevant to the determination of this application are specified in the Policy background section above.

Policy 1 of the Dundee Local Plan Review states that developments will be permitted where they do not adversely affect the environmental quality enjoyed by local residents by reason of design. The proposed monopole is designed to replicate the appearance of street furniture and would be painted a similar colour to the existing streetlighting columns nearby. The antennas would be contained within a shroud and therefore would not be visible. The nearest residential properties are located some 70 metres away from the application site. It is considered that the proposed monopole would not have a detrimental impact on the

amenity of the area by reason of its design.

The criteria set out in Policy 78 of the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005 focus on visual amenity matters and in particular promote mast sharing and masts on buildings.

The monopole promoted through this application is designed to replicate the appearance of existing street furniture, although it would be a taller and thicker structure than the existing streetlighting columns. The proposed monopole would be painted a grey colour (BS4800 00A05) in order to blend in with the existing street furniture.

The applicant considered a total of 11 sites as an alternative to this proposal. Two out of the eleven alternative sites considered by the applicant involved mast sharing. However, in order to accommodate the additional O2 equipment the existing masts would have to be significantly redeveloped. This would result in a significantly larger and bulkier structure than the relatively slim-line monopole promoted through this application. This would have a greater visual impact on the area than the proposed monopole. Therefore mast sharing would not be a suitable option in this case.

The applicant also investigated the possibility of siting antennas on existing buildings. In particular it was proposed to install the antennas behind replacement louvers within the spire of Downfield South Church. The option was progressed by O2 but significant public opposition lead to the Church Board withdrawing from the proposal with the result that it could no longer progress. Other buildings were also discounted due to public opposition and because tall equipment would be required to provide sufficient coverage to the target area. Therefore it is considered that the proposed monopole would have less visual impact than siting antennas on top of existing buildings in the search area.

Therefore in terms of the details of Policy 78, the proposal has an operational justification and 11 alternative sites have been considered by the applicants but these have had to be rejected because they were visually less acceptable. Accordingly it is considered that the proposal accords with the provisions of Policy 78.

The proposal was assessed in terms of the Council's Non Statutory Policies, which are a material consideration in terms of Policy 78. The proposal complies with Policy 1 of the Non Statutory Guidance as the applicant has provided an operational justification for the location and design of the proposal, alternative sites were assessed and the visual impact is acceptable.

It is concluded from the foregoing that the proposal complies with the provisions of the development plan.

Other Material Considerations

The other material considerations to be taken into account are as follows:

NPPG19 and PAN62

These documents give good general advice on the siting and design of masts and the Council's own Non Statutory Policies have similar themes. The documents advise that the siting and design of telecommunications development are the key issues to be addressed through the planning system. PAN62 gives case studies and good practice advice on the use of specialist designs of masts and antennas in order to minimise their visual impact on the environment.

Objections

Two letters of objection and a petition with some 31 signatures have been received to the proposal. The grounds of objection mainly relate to health issues. Other grounds raised by the objectors are that the proposed monopole may prejudice any potential future uses of the land to the east of the application site, that there is no need for the telecommunications monopole in the area, and that it would affect the value of houses in the area.

On the matter of health grounds it is stated in paragraph 53 of NPPG 19 the planning system should not be used to secure objectives that are more properly achieved under other legislation. Emissions of radiofrequency radiation are controlled and regulated under the appropriate legislation by the DTI and the Radiocommunications Agency. The Health and Safety Executive also have responsibilities. To demonstrate to Planning Authorities that the known health effects have been properly addressed, applications for planning permission involving antennas must be

accompanied by a declaration that the equipment and installation is designed to be in full compliance with the appropriate ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to radiofrequency radiation. With these measures in place the Scottish Executive concludes that it is not necessary for Planning Authorities to treat radiofrequency emissions as a material consideration. The applicant has confirmed in writing that the proposed installation would conform to the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to radiofrequency radiation.

The Scottish Executive published a report in early July 2004 entitled "Evaluation of Revised Planning Controls over Telecommunications Development". The report acknowledges that the issue of health concerns would inevitably arise, but specified that the research should not be directed into an extensive discussion of health issues. Whilst the Scottish Executive supports research into the subject of health impacts of mobile telecommunications and recognises the need for more research into the matter, the current position is that there is insufficient evidence that mobile telecommunication development causes a health risk. Therefore the objections on health grounds cannot be supported.

The applicant has submitted coverage plots in support of the application that demonstrate that there is a shortage of 3G coverage in the area. The coverage plots demonstrate that the proposed telecommunications monopole would fill the coverage gap and would provide 2G and 3G coverage to the Downfield area of the City. The applicant has demonstrated that there is an operational requirement and justification for the proposed monopole in this location. Therefore the objections on the basis that there is no requirement for a mast in this area are not supported.

The loss of value of property is not a material consideration in the determination of the application and therefore the objections to the proposed on this ground cannot be supported.

The land on the north side of Keswick Terrace is allocated for residential development by Proposal H49 of the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005. The nearest point of that allocated site is a similar distance away from the

proposed monopole as the closest existing houses. In terms of visual amenity, it is considered that the proposed monopole, by its slimline design, would not detract from the visual amenity of the area. It is therefore considered that the proposed monopole would not prejudice the future development of that allocated land. The grassed area of land to the east of the application site is not allocated under the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005. However, environmental improvements are to be carried out to provide a 'village green'.

It is concluded from the foregoing that insufficient weight can be accorded to any of the material considerations such as to justify the refusal of planning permission contrary to the provisions of the development plan. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted with conditions.

Design

The proposed monopole would be a relatively slimline structure and is designed to replicate the appearance of existing street furniture and there would be no visible antennas. The proposed monopole would also be painted to match the colour of the existing street furniture in the locality. Therefore it is considered that the proposed monopole is of a satisfactory design.

CONCLUSION

It is considered from the foregoing that the proposed development accords with the provisions of Policies 1 and 78 of the Dundee Local Plan Review 2005 and with National Policy. Although objections were received it is considered that they do not carry sufficient weight such as to justify the refusal of this planning application.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following condition(s):-

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within five years from the date of this permission
- 2 In the event that the telecommunications equipment hereby approved becomes obsolete or redundant it must be removed and the site reinstated to

the satisfaction of the planning authority within 2 months of the equipment ceasing to be used.

Reasons

- 1 To comply with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
- 2 In order to ensure that redundant telecommunications equipment do not contribute to visual clutter and to ensure satisfactory reinstatement of the site, in the interest of the visual amenity of the area.