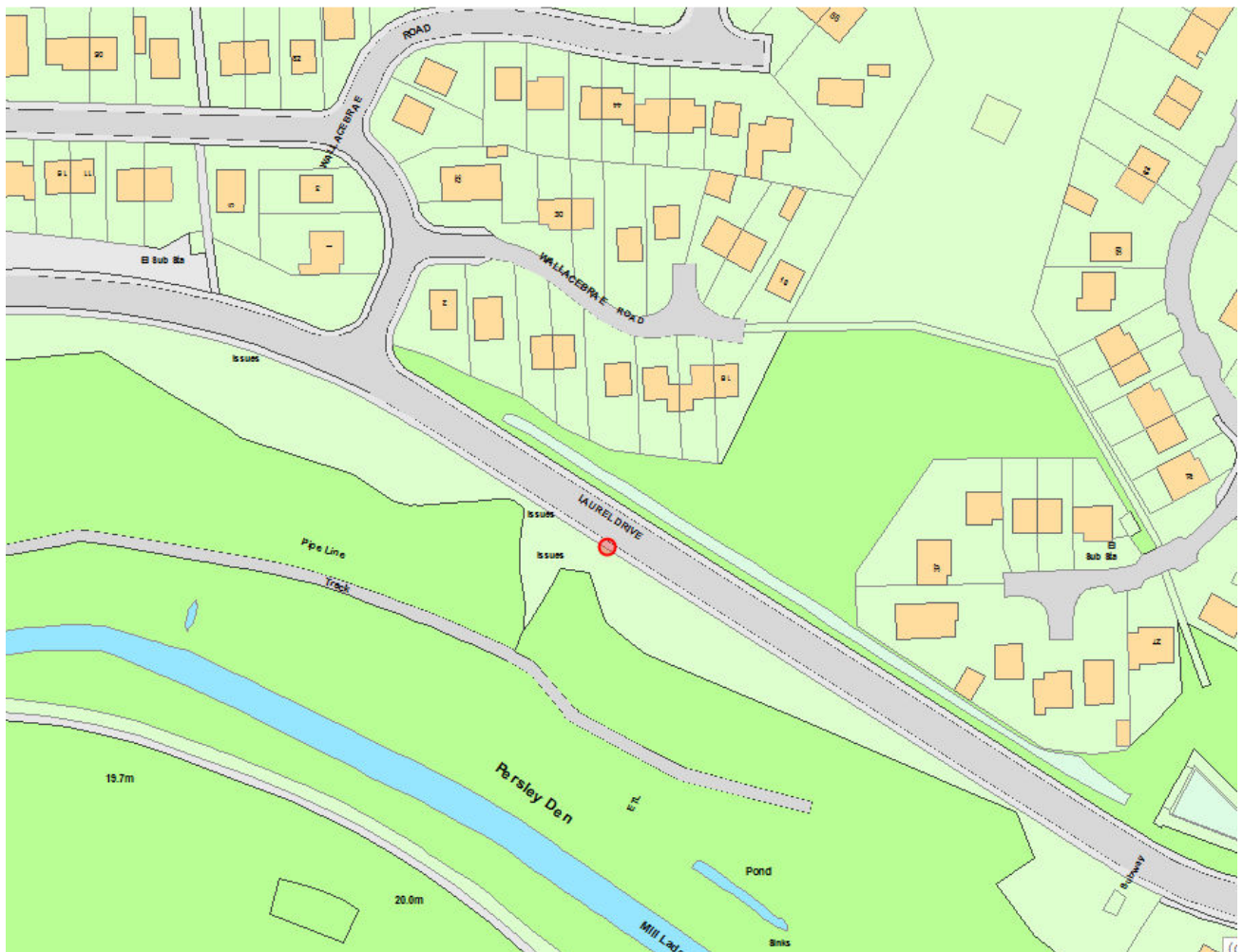


LAUREL DRIVE, DANESTONE

ERECTION OF 17.5M TALL MONOPOLE
SUPPORTING VODAFONE AND
TELEFONIA ANTENNA WITHIN GRP
SHROUD, 1 NO 300MM TRANSMISSION
DISH WITH EQUIPMENT CABINET

For: Vodafone

Application Ref.	: P120109	Advert	: Full Notify not poss.
Application Date	: 30/01/2012	(neighbours)	
Officer	: Jane Forbes	Advertised on	: 08/02/2012
Ward: Dyce/Bucksburn/Danestone (N		Committee Date	: 4 April 2012
MacGregor/B	Crockett/M	Community Council	: Comments
Penny)	McDonald/G		



RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

DESCRIPTION

The application site is a section of public footpath on the south side of Laurel Drive, at a distance of some 70 metres east of its junction with Wallacebrae Road. The site lies adjacent to a bus-stop and associated bus shelter, and is set back from the road by means of a layby. The footpath along the length of the layby has been widened to a depth of 3 metres. To the north of the application site are mainly 2 storey, residential properties which front onto Wallacebrae Road. The rear gardens of these properties back onto Laurel Drive, with the 1.8 metre high timber fencing extending along their rear boundaries lying at a distance of between 26 and 61 metres from the application site. An open area of amenity ground lies between the rear boundaries of these properties on Wallacebrae Road and Laurel Drive. To the south of the site, and beyond the footpath lies an open area of grass verge varying in depth between 2 to 6 metres. Beyond this the ground slopes quite steeply to the south, and is covered by a relatively dense area of mature trees rising to a height of approximately 13.5 metres. To the east of the bus shelter, and at a distance of 3.5 metres is an existing lamppost and litter bin.

HISTORY

Several applications have previously been submitted by the applicant for similar proposals on different sites within this area, with a need established for an effective 3G network.

Planning Application Ref: 10/0058, for the erection of a 14.8m high telecommunications mast and associated equipment on the footpath immediately to the south of the police station on Fairview Street was refused planning permission, contrary to officer recommendation, by the Development Management Sub-Committee in March 2010 for the following reasons:

- 1) The monopole, because of its height and prominent location, would be detrimental to the residential and visual amenity of the surrounding area;
- 2) The proposal, because of its location, has the potential to distract drivers as they approach the road junction, to the detriment of road safety.

The subsequent appeal was also dismissed for reasons related to visual amenity.

Planning Application Ref: 10/2006 for the erection of a 14.8m high telecommunications mast and associated equipment on the footpath leading to Wallacebrae Walk from Fairview Street was refused by the Development Management Sub-Committee (Visits) on 24th February 2010 against officer recommendation for reason that:

- 1) The visual impact of the mast would represent an unacceptable intrusion for the residents in the immediate area.

Planning Application Ref: 11/0628, for the erection of a 12.5m high telecommunications mast and associated equipment was refused planning permission, in accordance with officer recommendation, by the Development Management Sub-committee on 30 June 2011 for the following reason:

- 1) The visual impact of the telecommunications mast, by virtue of its location adjacent to residential properties and on a prominent open site, would represent an unacceptable intrusion for the residents in the immediate area.

The subsequent appeal was dismissed for reasons related to impact on residential amenity.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a 17.5 metre high telecommunications mast and 2 no. associated equipment cabinets, to be located on the public footpath along Laurel Drive, at a distance of approximately 70 metres east of its junction with Wallacebrae Road.

The proposed mast would have a monopole design, with a galvanised steel appearance, and accommodate 3G antennas and radio transmission dish. The equipment cabinet (1.8m x 1.6m x 0.7m) and meter cabinet (0.4m x 0.8m x 0.2m) would be located at ground level immediately adjacent to the mast. A distance of 2 metres would remain between the front of the equipment cabinet and the edge of the footpath.

The mast would be shared by two mobile phone operators, Vodafone and Telefonica. An ICNIRP certificate has been submitted by the applicant confirming full compliancy with health and safety requirements in relation to radio emissions.

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO SUB-COMMITTEE

The Council was notified as owners of the land and therefore the Council has an interest in the application. Notwithstanding this, the Bridge of Don Community Council has objected and therefore, in terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegation, such applications must be reported to the Development Management Sub-Committee.

CONSULTATIONS

ROADS SECTION – Agree with the proposal provided that the following comments are met:-

- Note that the proposed telecom pole and the cabinets are within the borders of a public road. The proposal should provide a minimum clear footway width of 1.5m for when the cabinet doors are open, to allow for pedestrian access and it seems that this has been achieved.
- The applicant should be made aware, that if the intended works involve the crossing of a footpath, carriageway or verge at any point, then that part of the works will require an application under the New Roads and Street Works Act.
- Should the application be recommended for approval, the applicant should be aware of their requirement to register as a member of the national register "Symology", and of the requirement to register the intended works through the Scottish Register "Symology".

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – No response received.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL – The Bridge of Don Community Council have submitted a letter of objection which opposes the proposed development on the following grounds: Proximity to existing housing; cause of obstruction to pedestrians using the footpath; location in close proximity to trees, which could constitute a hazard in stormy weather; and visual impact from the nearby park.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received in addition to the letter of objection from Bridge of Don Community Council.

PLANNING POLICY

Scottish Planning Policy (Communications Infrastructure) – Planning authorities should support the expansion of the electronic communications network, including telecommunications, broadband and digital infrastructure, through the development plan and development management decisions, taking into account the economic and social implications of not having full coverage or capacity in an area. This should be achieved in a way that keeps the environmental impact of communications infrastructure to a minimum. Planning authorities should take the cumulative visual effects of equipment into account when assessing new proposals.

Planning authorities should not question whether the service to be provided is needed nor seek to prevent competition between operators, but must determine applications on planning grounds.

Emissions of radiofrequency radiation are controlled and regulated under other legislation and it is therefore not necessary for planning authorities to treat them as a material consideration.

PAN 62 (Radio Telecommunications) – Highlights that when considering siting and design of telecommunications equipment, the main aim should be to minimise the contrast between the equipment and its surroundings. Further, operators should look to look at mast and site sharing as an option in order to lessen the impact of proposed development. Site sharing will appear more visually acceptable if the masts and other base station elements (equipment housing, power supply, access tracks and fencing) appear as a single group.

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012: Policy H1 (Residential Areas) – The site is located within an H1 Residential Area, where the Council seeks to retain the residential character and amenity of the area. It is further stated that proposals for non-residential uses will be refused unless they are considered complementary to residential use; or it can be demonstrated that the use would cause no conflict with, or any nuisance to, the enjoyment of existing residential amenity.

EVALUATION

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997(as amended) require that, in making a determination under the planning acts, regard is to be had to the provisions of the Development Plan and that determination shall be made in accordance with the Plan, so far as material to the application, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues for consideration are the siting and design of the proposed structure and its impact on the residential amenity of the wider area.

Prior to selecting the application site for the preferred location of the proposed mast, twelve other sites within the surrounding area were assessed and discounted for a variety of reasons including their lack of availability, technical limitations, and proximity to a high density of residential properties.

Scottish Planning Policy states that the cumulative visual impact of telecommunications equipment should be taken into account when assessing such proposals. In this instance, the proposed location of the mast and associated equipment cabinets within the bus lay-by setting ensures that the visual impact of the proposed development would be reduced both from the east and west when travelling along Laurel Drive. When viewed on approach from the west, due to the density and height of the mature trees growing along this stretch of Laurel Drive, the proposed development which would extend between 2 to 2.5 metres above the trees would be relatively well screened, particularly during the summer and autumn months when the trees are fully in leaf. On approaching from the east, the proposed mast and cabinet would be partially screened by the existing bus shelter and litter bin.

Whilst Planning Advice Note 62 (Radio Telecommunications) suggests that the selection of suitable locations for siting telecommunications equipment should be based on minimising the contrast between the equipment and its surroundings, it is nevertheless recognised that technical requirements and constraints may limit opportunities for sensitive design and siting. In this instance, the visual impact of the proposed telecommunications equipment on the surrounding area would not appear to be substantially greater than that of existing lamp standards. In addition to this, the backdrop provided by a relatively dense area of woodland which extends along this section of Laurel Drive would serve to minimise any visual intrusion resulting from the proposed development.

The principle of site sharing between operators is supported by Planning Advice Note 62. This particular mast would be shared between network operators Vodafone and Telefonica. The result is that rather than two separate masts being installed within the area, only one would be required, reducing the number of overall structures needed to provide coverage in the area, which is considered to be a positive aspect of the proposal.

The application site lies within an area designated as H1 (Residential Areas) in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012). The primary aim of policy H1 is to retain the existing residential amenity of established residential areas. The proposed telecommunications equipment would be located on a distributor road within a residential area with no properties having a direct frontage onto the road. In addition to this, a minimum distance of 26 metres would separate the rear boundary of the closest property on Wallacebrae Road from the application site, with the remaining rear boundaries of properties on Wallacebrae Road with any direct view of the application site lying at a distance of anything up to 62 metres. As a result, it is considered that the proposed telecommunications equipment would not conflict with, or cause any significant nuisance to the enjoyment of existing residential amenity, and that the proposal would not be contrary to policy H1 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012).

The Bridge of Don Community Council raised concerns relating to the proximity of the proposed development to existing housing, however, as outlined above, the separation distance between residential properties and the application site is considered to be acceptable. In terms of the concerns which they raised in relation to the adverse visual impact of the telecommunications equipment, when viewed from the park which lies to the south of the site, it is considered that the high density of mature trees along this southern section of Laurel Drive would provide a particularly effective level of screening from within the amenity area lying to the south of the application site, and this, coupled with the considerable drop in ground level between the footpath along Laurel Drive and the park would mitigate any potential visual impact. The Roads Section have raised no objection to the proposal, and have stated that they are satisfied with the width of clear footway which would remain following the proposed development. Finally, whilst an issue was raised by the Community Council in terms of the possible hazard arising during stormy weather where trees lie in such close proximity to telecommunications equipment, this is not a material planning consideration in the determination of this proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

It is considered that this application complies with both national and local policy. The proposal is considered to be compliant with Scottish Planning Policy, as it allows for the shared use of a telecommunications mast and associated equipment by 2 no. operators, thus reducing any likely cumulative impact; and ensures that the proposed development is sited in such a manner as to minimise the visual impact and contrast with the surrounding area, and minimises any likely impact on existing residential amenity. As such, the proposed development is considered to comply with Planning Advice Note 62 (Radio Telecommunications) and Policy H1 (Residential Areas) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012. Whilst several applications for similar proposals have been refused within the surrounding area, this particular site has not previously been considered, and its selection would appear to address concerns raised with previous applications.

it is recommended that approval is granted with the following condition(s):

- (1) in the event that any part of this equipment becomes obsolete or redundant, it must be removed within 6 months of such event. In the event that all of this equipment is removed, the site shall be made good, in accordance with a scheme to be submitted and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, within 1 month of such removal – to minimise the level of visual intrusion and ensure the reinstatement of the site to a satisfactory condition.

Dr Margaret Bochel

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.