

17th November 2005

Chief Planning Officer
Ryedale District Council
Ryedale House
Malton
YO17 0HH

Chairman: Mr W Worsley
AONB Officer: Paul Jackson
My Reference: 3.1
Your Reference: 05/01255/TELE

Dear Sir,

Erection of 10m high mast (imitation transformer pole)

I am responding as Chairman of the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee to your consultation regarding the above proposal.

This application involves the erection of a mobile phone mast, disguised as an electricity transformer pole, in a location just inside the boundary of the AONB. The application is very similar to one submitted in March this year and hence my Committee's comments follow a similar line to those submitted last time.

I have the following comments to make:

- The Joint Advisory Committee's policy on modern communications technology is contained in Objective D6 of the AONB Management Plan. The Committee's aim is to achieve total coverage of the AONB, but in a way that does not harm the nationally important landscape.
- In landscape terms, my Committee does not feel that the proposed mast would be a significantly intrusive element in the landscape. Electricity poles are commonplace, although there are very few in this vicinity, and it is encouraging to see Orange matching the mast design to this rural location.
- The new location 38m uphill from the gates is better screened than the roadside location which, together with the 2m reduction in height, will mitigate short-distance views. Long distance views from neighbouring Public Rights of Way and the B1257 are unlikely to be significantly changed from those presented by the previous application.
- The electricity connection to the equipment cabinets/mast should be trenched underground and should not be via overhead line.

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Whilst the technical information supplied by the Applicant indicates that radiation levels are well within international guidelines, the presence of a children's day nursery approximately 370m from the mast is an issue that needs to be considered. This is an important facility in a rural area, providing both employment and essential child-care facilities. Whilst the technical information might indicate that the mast is safe, the precautionary principle is particularly important in this situation. The potential effect on attendance at the nursery, due to parents' perception of the risk, and consequently its future viability, is a factor that the District Council should consider.

- We believe that this application still represents a missed opportunity. The proposed mast is being sited to cover the route corridor of the B1257 and several villages along its route. Whilst this will benefit a reasonably large number of people, including the AONB Office, we feel that a bolder proposal would have greater benefits and fewer perceived risks. Development such as this within AONBs should be of the highest quality and aim to provide the maximum benefit, to mitigate their impact on the landscape.
- My Committee feels that the landscape issues raised over a Fryton Wood site have not been adequately addressed by the applicant. Given that a site on the ridge would be adjacent to woodland, as all the other masts in the AONB are, a **sympathetically designed and sited mast** would not necessarily be unacceptable. Even the taller height of a 20m+ macrocell mast could potentially be accommodated, giving possible mobile phone coverage to Terrington and other villages as well. As indicated previously, we would like to see mobile phone coverage of the whole AONB and we will therefore try to get maximum benefit from each proposed mast.
- The applicant is persisting with the opinion that a 20m+ mast at Fryton Wood would be unacceptable in the AONB landscape, despite my Committee's previous comments to the contrary and request that this option be assessed again. The information submitted with the application contains no landscape impact assessment to support the applicant's opinion. The issue of an electricity connection, which we would insist should be underground, is a technical and commercial issue in its own right, but the AONB designation should not be used as a spurious smokescreen to mask that. A shared lattice tower mast approximately 25m tall is located unobtrusively in a clump of trees at Whitwell-on-the-Hill, which shows that careful design and siting can enable tall structures to be integrated successfully into the AONB landscape.

In conclusion, whilst my Committee has no formal objection to this development, it still believes that an acceptable location could be found on higher ground to the south, which would provide greater cell coverage whilst also removing any perceived risk to children attending the nursery.

Yours sincerely

WILLIAM WORSLEY
Chairman
Howardian Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee